The academic librarian as blended professional

6

As I repeatedly have asserted, academic librarians, with their numerous and sometimes ambiguous roles, also may be considered blended professionals. The academic librarians at St. Jerome perform an assortment of functions in the academy that comprise aspects of research, instruction, and service, and necessitate interaction and influence in a variety of physical and virtual spaces (Crawford, 2012). In this chapter, I present the findings that validate this assentation.

Since the findings are based upon the interpretation of qualitative data from an individual case, the results will be study-specific. However, the frame applied is transitional to other libraries and librarians. Additionally, some of the responses will be indicative of environments and the perceptions of professional identity elsewhere, so the results presented have universal relevance.

Once again though, blended professionals are individuals who "are characterized by an ability to build common ground with a range of colleagues, internal and external to the university, and to develop new forms of professional space, knowledge, relationships and legitimacies associated with broadly based institutional projects such as student life, business development and community partnership" (Whitchurch, 2009, p. 417). Principally, blended professionals engage with a variety of individuals and departments in order to perform their professional and academic duties; the actual roles and the surroundings in which they are executed generate perceived professional identities.

More so, the hierarchical and perceived placement in the process of curricular student learning between faculty and students places academic librarians in an exceptional space within the context of higher education. Whitchurch's four-tiered frame considering spaces, knowledges, relationships, and legitimacies is a suitable model for analysis, as librarians operate in a blended professional mode on an everyday basis. The librarians interact with nearly every facet of the university community in one way or another. Yet the librarians' role affects their perception of their abilities and limits the completeness of their capacity to blend into all real or perceived contexts around the university.

Each category in Table 6.1 has the ability to influence the librarians, as blended professionals' approach and style depending upon the perception of the activity. The resulting opinion then defines the workable ability of the librarians at St. Jerome to blend into different communities around the institution. In essence, the categories help explain the boundaries of the academic librarians at St. Jerome and form the basis for the following section.

Table 6.1 **The table above lists the traits of the blended professional along with the categories that emerged from the qualitative interviews and field research and serves as a roadmap for Section II**

	Spaces	Knowledges	Relationships	Legitimacies
Influences on blended professional role of academic librarians at St. Jerome	Geography Stigma & misunderstanding of role Technologies	Resource evaluation Disciplinary language Social language	Managerial perspectives Colleagues Faculty Students & staff	Workspace Legitimizing knowledge Status quo

The model is adapted from the model of Whitchurch, C. (2009). The rise of the blended professional in higher education: a comparison between the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States. *Higher Education*, *58*(3), 407–418.

6.1   Spaces

The previous section affirmed that the academic librarians at St. Jerome have fundamentally similar roles as the tenure-track faculty, yet the output is less and the emphases are inverted. The following will discuss how the academic librarian fits into the blended professional model and how their particular position in the campus community creates a unique third space. The third space that the librarians occupy might best be explained with a quote from Veronica. After much petitioning, she finally was added to her department's email Listserv.

> *The email thread for that one was interesting for how many people it had to be punted to saying "Oh yeah, she can be on it" or…but I guess whoever was the gatekeeper was like "Yeah, you're not a student. You're not faculty. So you're not going to be a part of it."*

The librarians are not students or faculty, but they have the potential ability to balance between both entities and contribute to the complete campus collective. It is a unique space in that the librarians' purpose is to extend in-class learning. Other blended entities on campus, such as student affairs department, supplement purely academic student learning with extracurricular activities and functions.

Therefore, librarians have access to physical and perceptual communities on campus due to what they can provide. In Whitchurch's (2009, p. 410) words, the academic librarians of St. Jerome "accommodate the ambiguities of third space between professional and academic domains." Their role extends beyond administrative and professional responsibilities due to their contributions to the academic endeavors of the community, yet the limitations of their position and expertise thwart a wholly academic identity. Indeed, who they are prevents their complete acceptance into the communities with whom they interact. The contributing factors around their positions will now be examined.

6.1.1 Geography

One of the basic challenges concerning place that the librarians face at St. Jerome pertains to geography. As mentioned, St. Jerome's librarians are spread across three campuses: St. Michael, St. Raphael, and St. Gabriel. The Alexander VI and Stephen VI libraries are both on the St. Michael Campus, which is a sprawling residential campus in a suburban area. Clement V Library is located on the newly residential St. Raphael Campus, which is in a rural setting approximately 15 miles to the west of the St. Michael Campus. Urban II Library on the St. Gabriel Campus is in an urban setting and caters primarily to professional, nonresidential students.

St. Jerome is in a metro area where traffic congestion makes travel between campuses problematic. This reality in itself creates artificial siloing between the libraries at the campuses that has implications beyond mere isolation.

> Susanna: St. Michael…I feel totally isolated from. St. Raphael I tend to forget about. Unless one of them contacts me I tend to forget that they even exist. Being out here [St. Michael's librarians] completely forget what we can do out here and sometimes they forget that we're out here in general. Then they also don't realize that sometimes, because they don't interact with us, what our specialties are.

Again, remember that the librarians at St. Jerome are liaison librarians. The liaison librarian fits the concept of blended professional in definition and function; they work within the library and liaise with their academic department and its constituents, and in various communities around the campus. One of the benefits of this model is that specialists exist and when complicated disciplinary questions emerge, the patron may be referred to a particular librarian with a background in that field. In Susanna's case, she has a very unique social science specialty that may be considered a subset of other disciplines. As Susanna is implying, the librarians at St. Michael, due to a lack of sustained interaction, tend to disregard her abilities and refer patrons to more generic disciplines. This may create problems for the patron because they are potentially referred to an individual without the expertise to solve the problem. It also complicates the role of the librarian who is being asked to resolve an issue that they might not have the ability to grasp in its entirety.

The geographic situation also exacerbates other manners of isolation. One librarian described her boss as a micromanager who required all staff to have approval to travel to different campuses. The librarian had made some collaborative connections with librarians located on different campuses, but in her opinion, her supervisor prevented travel because there was a personality dispute. Melania states: "I feel isolated now in my own library and also isolated from what's going on at other campuses."

At one point in my career, I worked at one of the distributed campus' libraries and found the experience to be exactly the same as what the librarians described. For instance, every year there was a massive holiday party intended for all the St. Jerome libraries held at the St. Michael Campus. The refreshments are catered and plentiful. It is toward the end of the exam period during the fall semester, usually during the third week of December. Most students have left campus and the patronage in the libraries dramatically drops.

Still, all of the libraries need to remain open just in case, and as a result, many of the librarians and staff at the distributed campuses' libraries do not or cannot attend the large party. In order to provide an equal opportunity for these library employees to enjoy in festivities, money normally is provided so that the distributed libraries might host smaller, separate parties. In contrast to the larger party at St. Michael, these gatherings are rather Spartan. One year, I recall our library being given enough money to order three pizzas, which amounted to just less than two slices of pizza per employee at the time. I remember my colleagues being quite perturbed at the gesture.

In other instances, siloing emerged between libraries on the same campus. In the past 2 years, the librarians at Stephen VI have begun to focus heavily on instruction and outreach to the undergraduate community. Alexander VI in contrast has shifted its charge by attempting to provide services focused on the graduate and faculty populations at the St. Michael Campus. The ideology of "facilitating information to students and faculty" of St. Jerome remains the same. However, graduate and faculty work is seen as "real research" and more pedantic in substance. It intensifies division. As Lucy stated:

> I felt like the Alexander VI librarians were very…like, "We are the subject liaisons, and we are…" I don't know where they get that attitude. I'm not saying that translates to everyone but they sometimes come off as elite…or better than the other librarians. And I've heard them say bad things about other librarians on the other campuses if that…as if the other campuses are inferior. Which I think goes back to the whole "We are one library" thing, but we're not really becoming one library.

Part of the problem with Lucy's statement is that regardless of whether or not the Alexander VI librarians have or display elitist attitudes, the sensitivity exists. Perceived belief may have just as much likelihood to create negative professional opinions as an actual attitude or obstacle.

Perhaps a contributing factor to this concern is the location of the library administration for St. Jerome. The librarians at Alexander VI have offices located in a "cubicle farm." Within that room is the supervisor of all the librarians at St. Jerome. Across the hall is the office of the Dean of the Libraries. The decision-making process consistently was described as Alexander VI-centric. Important meetings, trainings, and even the aforesaid holiday parties are planned with this library in mind. The implication was that the location of the administration itself influenced this process, again providing the perception of favoritism and further isolating the other libraries.

Communication, or lack thereof, does not help the siloing. Yes, decisions are made frequently with the St. Michael Campus libraries at the forefront of the process. However, the policy decisions are universal, often without definitive explanation:

> Gwen: I definitely feel like some decisions are made within the library system centrally that…like unless I'm very aggressive and or nosy, don't always necessarily trickle down or then maybe they just trickle down later than other things that are happening.

A formal example of this occurred in the summer of 2014 when the research for this project was ongoing. Circulation staff was to receive uniform training on answering

reference questions. All circulation staff at St. Michael attended four weekly 1.5 hour trainings during the month of July. One librarian, located at the St. Gabriel Campus, stated that their staff training would be a single session and occur just prior to the start of classes at the end of August. It also would be taught by a different librarian than the one instructing the four sessions at the St. Michael Campus. The quality of training at the St. Gabriel Campus invariably was different than that received at the St. Michael Campus due to the amount of time spent. In addition, the librarian who taught the classes at the St. Michael Campus developed the training. St. Gabriel essentially received a distilled training from a supplemental trainer.

Throughout the community of librarians, geography encouraged siloing, creating situations where librarians move primarily within their own spheres of influence, be that a specific library or campus. These findings are significant because this compounds the academic librarians' isolation among the greater academic community because it restricts the limits of blended professional's spatial mobility.

6.1.2   Stigma and misunderstanding

The academic librarians at St. Jerome have difficulty gaining acceptance in the greater academic community, in part due to some of the differences in the roles of the librarians and the tenure-track faculty outlined in the previous chapter. The level of research is different between the two entities, which frequently puts the librarians into a service-oriented role. The lack of a foothold in the academic community was often credited to a misunderstanding of the role of the librarian.

> Laura: Generally I don't think that faculty recognize what we…because we haven't educated them, or they just don't know, or they're too busy, or whatever…they don't recognize what we can contribute. So we're isolated in that kind of context.

Again, this misunderstanding by the faculty may directly relate to the conflicted role that the librarians have of themselves. They view themselves as service providers, yet the administration emphasizes collaboration. Collaboration suggests equal or at least similar standing in role. Service retains the connotation of "servant." These are completely different ideologies that are difficult to reconcile, resulting in a lack of shared ventures and a prevalent and restricting stigma about the librarians' role. The mere perception of that identity creates a formidable challenge to overcome.

Unfortunately, college faculty primarily still utilize the library and its librarians principally for the acquisition of materials and occasionally as space for research labors (Marcus, Covert-Vail, & Mandel, 2007). For example, one study found that a vast majority of faculty value library services, but only a fraction utilized their liaisons for instruction, finding the greatest use of the library to be ordering books or serials for the faculty (Yang, 2000). As repeatedly asserted, collaboration is not viewed as the purpose of the space in which librarians at St. Jerome occupy.

> Bridget: [Faculty] don't do research the way we [librarians] think about research. They know people in their specialty so they're going directly to them. So in some ways they see the librarian as very much for the students but they're not going to use them necessarily for themselves unless it's something very, very tricky.

Essentially, research has shown that faculty like and seemingly appreciate the services provided by the libraries (Bausman, Ward, & Pell, 2014; Oakleaf, 2010; O'Clair, 2012), but the faculty does not wish to maintain or initiate said services, and therefore, they may not provide long-term opportunities for collaboration.

As a result, librarians have found it difficult to gain respect for collaboration or outreach in the academic departments. According to Elizabeth: "I've put out feelers about collaboration, collaborating on research, but nothing's ever come out of it." In fact, the survey of librarian schedules at St. Jerome found that only 3.9% of their time was scheduled to be in office hours located in an academic department. This is unfortunate because activities like office hours provide a means for the librarians to engage with the university community outside of the physical confines of the library.

> Julia: When I'm over there [in the department for office hours], I am not only meeting students, I am in a physical place where faculty members come through that particular office all the time too. So if someone needs to ask me a question, I'll tell them I'll be over there on Tuesday from 5 to 7, you can pop in and some people just come by and say hello because they know that I'm there or they need something or whatever. So it's really an advantage to have a known presence in a building like that.

Without a physical presence provided by office hours, outreach becomes more challenging and time-consuming for the academic librarians.

Even on a real social level, there appears to be a significant barrier between the occupied places of the librarians and the tenure-track faculty. Jessica related the following example.

> *The faculty, it's weird. This is so weird. I was going to someone's retirement party a couple months ago and I actually ended up running in to a couple of English faculty members, one of whom turned out to come from the same part of the country as I do. And it was weird because it was very collegial. I almost felt out of place. I felt odd and I wasn't quite sure what to make of it. But then when I saw one of them later at a conference, it felt much more distant. I don't know. It's a little uneven.*

McHenry and Sharkey (2014, p. 35) assert that "growing distinction between tenured and tenure-track faculty members on the one hand and tenure-ineligible lecturers or part-time adjuncts on the other has produced an academic caste system that is undermining the raison d'être of our institutions of higher learning." Similar to the geographic restrictions, these limitations are also perceived in that there is no written or physical barrier truly preventing interaction. Yet the perceptions of both the faculty and the librarians engage to create a socially constructed boundary that inhibits the interactions of the blended professional.

Therefore, librarians at St. Jerome do not achieve complete acceptance into communities around campus, perhaps because they have a lower rank in social capital (Burns, 2004). They have the ability to interact but cannot achieve a true foothold, and their space is defined by what they are not. These discoveries therefore suggest that the academic librarians exist on a third space that is subordinate to tenure-track faculty, and at the same time, the librarians find socially constructed restraints preventing the complete amalgamation of blended professional their role.

6.1.3 Technology and space

It was mentioned that the purpose of the librarian role is often misinterpreted by members of the academic community. Part of that stems from the historic model of the librarian working within a building crammed with volumes of books and journals.

> Valeria: I think there are a lot of truly academic organizations out there that really don't see the purpose of us. I think in a lot of institutions people question the value of the librarians. I mean I think in an old-fashioned way they think of us as the keeper of a collection.

This notion increasingly is becoming obsolete due to the continued advances in library technologies.

On the positive side, librarians do have a technological advantage that spreads the blended space in which they work. Academic libraries offer a substantial connectivity to the university academic collective since they bridge the information gap between the faculty and the student. The actual use of the once-traditional, physical library itself began to shift in the late 1990s (Lougee, 2002). Physical volumes of some journals are being phased out in favor of online subscriptions. The on-campus library is evolving into a smaller study center and less of a repository (Jeevan, 2007; Lougee, 2002). This modification of thought is significant since it made the transition to servicing the campus community in their ubiquitous digital learning much more natural.

Despite this reduction in physical presence, librarians at St. Jerome have several options for outreach and interaction with campus community patrons, such as online information guides (Roberts & Hunter, 2011; Robinson & Kim, 2010) and live and recorded web tutorials (Charnigo, 2009; Dunlap, 2002; Shiao-Feng & Kuo, 2010). However, the popular suggestion to achieve rapid interaction is through virtual communication (Bennett & Simning, 2010; Hawes, 2011), labeled in library-parlance as Virtual Reference.

The premise of virtual reference is simple. The librarian is not tied to a specific reference point, such as a desk or phone, and the interaction is immediate, so the communication is quicker than email. The medium of communication creates the potential for extended hours of service, both on campus and off. Virtual reference includes avenues of written digital communication such as Instant Messaging (IM) (Bower & Mee, 2010; Whitehair, 2010) and video chat, such as via Skype (Booth, 2008).

Virtual Reference grew from libraries attempting to use digital tools in order to provide learning opportunities and communication with patrons who could not directly visit a reference desk. It is a different interaction though from consultations that occur in person.

> Lucy: Even someone who has a lot of experience [with virtual reference] and I think I'm pretty good at that…it can be hard sometimes and sometimes you have to take a step back and realize that you can't show the empathy that you're trying to that you would show in person. You have to be almost more demonstrative and over exaggerate it.

Any form of virtual reference requires patience and training. As Lucy says: "You have to refine your skills to work in that environment." The journey into technology requires a willingness on the part of the librarian to extend beyond the traditional definition and image of a librarian, perhaps requiring a shift in paradigms, both personally

and professionally. The ability to extend space virtually enhances the academic librarians' capacity to reach a larger populace.

In an environment where many actual or perceived roadblocks to collaboration exist, technology is a means to bridge many gaps. The usage of virtual reference at St. Jerome continues to increase on an annual basis. For instance, in the calendar year of 2011, there were 1926 questions fielded via IM; in 2012, that number increased to 3016. It is a popular medium through which librarians may interact with the university community, and it represents a viable means to continue to blend professional boundaries in spite of physical and cultural hindrances.

6.1.4   Spaces summary

Technology greatly enhances the third space in which the academic librarians are able to interact and extend their professional boundaries and third space. However, geographic restrictions develop physical and then subsequently cultural silos between personnel at the various libraries of St. Jerome. Their limitations are further complicated by the academic community's misunderstanding of the librarian role as well as the personality and gender traits of the librarians themselves, which is something that will be discussed later in this chapter. These findings indicate that the academic librarians have the ability to blend across different barriers of space, but the existing complications greatly diminish the librarians' effectiveness as blended professionals because the obstacles limit the actual or perceived interactive spaces in which the librarians might work and thrive.

6.2   Knowledges

Whitchurch (2009) asserts that the knowledge or knowledges that a professional retains and distributes creates a blended identity. With tenure-track faculty, this knowledge would be their personal specialty knowledge within their discipline. The liaison librarians at St. Jerome who were interviewed, on the other hand, all provide the ability to find and evaluate materials needed by the academic community. As Maria states: "Our job is to find additional information, or the data, or additional data…whatever they need relevant to whatever experiment that they're doing." That is the basic knowledge that all librarians at St. Jerome may provide by one means or another; it is an expectation of librarians in general. In terms of collaboration and acceptance across boundaries at an academic institution though, secondary abilities and skills earned through disciplinary study also come into play and form a key function of the ultimate success of the blended professional.

6.2.1   Evaluating resources

The knowledges concept of blended professionalism helps explain the unique third space that librarians occupy. Discovering and assessing researchable information is a

key function of academic librarians in the context of higher education. The librarians fill that knowledge gap between faculty instruction and student learning. It is a unique academic space occupied by librarians.

Knowledges do vary though, even at the generic level. When asked about the most important knowledge that they might provide, the answers were varied. This is not surprising as knowledge, or perception of knowledge, is subjective and based upon personal experience (Buckland, 1991). However, the most common response regarding significant knowledges dealt with finding and evaluating resources.

> Researcher: What would you consider the most important knowledge or expertise that you provide?
> Melania: Teaching students how to evaluate resources and choosing the right resources to conduct their research.

In the field of library science, the evaluation of information falls into the realm of knowledge management. In general, knowledge management consists of "accessing, evaluating, managing, organizing, filtering, and distributing information in a manner that is useful to end users…" professional judgment-based activities perfected by librarians (DiMattia & Oder, 1997, p. 33). The complexity of the problem addressed will alter the steps in the process and the resources consulted. However, historically this is the basis of the role of librarian: evaluate and categorize materials required by the patronage of that particular library (Rubin, 2004).

Systemic change complicates the distribution of knowledge as well. Modifications in how the library is viewed and used due to the influx of technologies, ubiquitous learning, and philosophical roles impact the blended places of the academic librarians in the academy.

> *The philosophy of knowledge management…is proving to be a catalyst for change –*
> *creating an atmosphere in which focus is no longer upon processes taking*
> *place in buildings called libraries, but upon knowledge workers as information*
> *intermediaries and upon organizing systems to capture that knowledge embedded*
> *therein and then transmitting it to those customers who seek answers.*
> *Stueart and Moran (2007, p. 45)*

The academic librarians themselves are vehicles of knowledge. They are the individuals that interpret the resources available and "create an interactive knowledge environment" (Whitchurch, 2009, p. 410). As well, this transmission of knowledge may occur in a scheduled or random environment. For example, Gwen relates: "A lot of that is kind of more ad hoc, like in individual conversations with people that I might happen to have about their research. I might mention, like 'Oh we actually have this really great [product]. Have you tried that?'" Synthesis of the problem becomes a seminal part of the academic librarians' interaction with patronage (Bopp & Smith, 2011).

Comfort and understanding related to knowledge management enhances collaborative attitudes (Aharony, 2011). Demonstrating an ability to analyze knowledge effectively, as well as understand and utilize resources, particularly with faculty, sometimes shocks the patronage.

Lucy: I think that faculty are often surprised by how much librarians do know. But it's getting the opportunity…I think like one of the biggest things is to let faculty see that librarians do know things about student learning and how to align student learning outcomes with research needs and library needs and how to show through assessment measures that something's been accomplished…[but] they don't always let us in that far.

This surprise at the expertise of the academic librarians at St. Jerome extends back to the difference in the production of research discussed in the first section of this chapter. Tenure-track faculty are proficient in the totality of the research process, which, as mentioned, includes the production of disciplinary research. Librarians, however, truly are experts in the evaluation, acquisition, and dissemination of resources and knowledge. This aspect of the findings is key, the universal trait that all librarians retain as blended professionals.

6.2.2   Speaking the language

Every discipline employs its own vocabulary, a language often best understood by those in the discipline. The librarians at St. Jerome are no different, using terms, or jargon, that are specialized and often confusing for nonlibrary personnel and patronage. Adele states that during instruction: "I try not to throw library jargon at them. I don't know if that's a teaching method but I try to use more natural language when talking to them." These terminologies change depending upon the institution. For example, at St. Jerome, the electronic catalog labels a book that has been "checked out" as "charged;" a returned book is "discharged," as opposed to "returned." Still, the campus community not always is privy to such information, and minor language uses such as these potentially isolate the librarians.

More in-depth research terminology has its own code as well. Many librarians employ the use of Boolean Operators for their searches. For instance, if an individual searches for "higher AND education," they will find only materials including both terms. In contrast, if the individual searches for "Higher OR education," they will find more results because the findings will include one or both of the terms. The use of this method often requires explanation. "Oh, okay. You want to use a Boolean search. Oh, you were born in 1995. You don't know what that means." However, it behooves librarians to teach this methodology because it has been shown to enhance research skills in even novice users (Dinet, Favart, & Passerault, 2004). The search engines employed on St. Jerome's library website also operate based upon Boolean phraseology, so students or faculty might accidentally encounter these options and seek librarian guidance for resolution.

Also, while unified service models are being utilized in three of the four libraries at St. Jerome, the largest library, Alexander VI, still utilizes a separate circulation desk and a reference desk. In general, circulation desks are staff by classified, nonlibrarian staff, whereas reference desks are populated by academic librarians. Circulation staff handle the acquisition of the materials (checking out books, ordering materials), whereas librarians at the reference desks help evaluate and locate information for the patron.

The librarians asserted a misunderstanding of the duties of the personnel at the various desks. "I think that everybody thinks that everybody that works in a library is a librarian," to include sometimes even the student workers. As a result, it is not always

readily apparent that a student should visit a reference desk in order to find research assistance. Even simple things like this add to confusion to patrons that are newer to the system. Navigating and translating this language allows the librarian to better communicate with the general university population.

In addition, the databases and catalogs also have their own terminologies. For example, in the medical field, there is a vocabulary known as MeSH (Medical Subject Headings). "It is designed to help quickly locate descriptors of possible interest and to show the hierarchy in which descriptors of interest appear" (NIH, 2014). Articles in databases are linked together using subject headings deriving from the language. Demonstrating and communicating the effectiveness of the usage of this language is an important facet of the librarians' abilities.

> Researcher: What's the best way that you can communicate that kind of knowledge?
> Laura: Showing them how to use that language when they're doing searches. So keywords, controlled vocabulary, about things that are relevant. And then contrasting it with how they're doing their current searching. Like if they're using Google Scholar search and then I can take them into [a disciplinary database] and say "We can use this term that's been assigned that might work…"
> Researcher: So distilling their process?
> Laura: Yeah.

The other major cited way to communicate this knowledge is through interactive instruction. During the observed one-shot instruction sessions, when time allowed, the students practiced searching for resources with the librarian present. Often the mistake made by the student was overcomplicating the search. They would use too many words and then return no results. The librarians offered more effective search methods and terms, such as "productive" as opposed to "good." Understanding and applying this knowledge of vocabulary greatly enhances a researcher's ability to find relevant materials in a short amount of time.

While Google and similar search engines have led many to believe that searching for information is a simplistic task, effective research is much more complex. This actuality gives the librarians as blended professionals the ability to interact with a wide range of the university populace. However, in order to gain more intimate acceptance in a disciplinary role, the findings indicate that an additional knowledge in the form of language is often required.

6.2.3 Social language

Speaking the language also extends to social interactions with certain disciplines. The librarians who held a secondary subject master's degrees often cited that degree's ability to open doors.

> Veronica: Oh, knowledge. Well, considering that I do have that [disciplinary] background it seems like I have a little edge in that aspect then because in terms of meeting with my faculty and students since I do have that background I don't have to be shy that I'm not familiar with the programs because I am.
> Researcher: You speak the language?
> Veronica: I speak the language.

Some of this interaction involves verbal communication and terminology. The example previously mentioned during the discussion on one-shot instruction observation is a primary example of effective knowledge of verbal communication. The question fielded by the librarian was so specific that only a knowledge-area specialist would have been able to interpret correctly the question and formulate a precise response.

The other component is the understanding of the social habits of the individuals within specific departments. In-depth interactions provide understanding of the needs of specific academic sectors (Jankowska & Marshall, 2003), which is especially important when effective written or verbal communication is not a forte of members of that discipline (Steiner, 2011).

> Now this is going to sound really egotistical but I think one of the things that I bring definitely to the department and maybe to the community….is my training in the sciences. We have how many science librarians and how many of them actually have a degree in it? Two. And it's a whole different thought process and I think you know being able to sit in a group of people and say "You don't understand the way the science faculty are really thinking about this or the way they're going to do it."

It is an acculturation process often learned as graduate students in nonlibrary degree programs (Mitchell & Morton, 1992) and provides a disciplinary identity (Xiaoli et al., 2010).

The surveyed librarians seemingly understand the efficacy of disciplinary language, yet it was not universally mentioned, perhaps because not all of the librarians had multiple master's degrees. Establishing the importance of that knowledge in line with professional success suggests that an additional degree is required, and possibly not all of the librarians were willing to make that commitment. However, consider all of the aforementioned physical and social limitations facing the academic librarians when they perform outreach and seek to gain "admittance" to particular disciplinary departments.

Language, in spite of those obstacles, opens the proverbial door for the librarians. As a result, the particular knowledge of language serves as a key to the effectiveness of the blended professional model. Language and its presence in the librarians' discussions designate its importance for developing collaborative opportunities and extending the boundaries of the perceived third space.

6.2.4   Knowledges summary

The academic librarians at St. Jerome valued their ability to evaluate information and provide methods for their patronage to acquire the resources needed to complete their projects. Speaking the language and having the ability to acculturate oneself into an academic community was a skill specified by the librarians with disciplinary master's degrees. Clearly those librarians who mentioned it perceive language's significance as it almost automatically extends the librarians' third space from the general realm to the disciplinary fields. This is noteworthy in the conversation on blended professionalism because that additional avenue of communication with the university community.

If the library science degree and general librarian role offers the perceived "support" stigma, then the language provides the librarians a means at least to partially overcome that obstacle and gain social and intellectual access to specific factions of the academic community.

6.3 Relationships

Professional relationships "are networks of connections among employees, staff, and external organizations that are primarily relational in nature. They exist to foster and promote good relations among team members" (Olson & Singer, 2004, p. 9). At St. Jerome, these partnerships exist on a variety of vertical and horizontal levels both interior and exterior to the library. They represent the personal third spaces that the academic librarians occupy.

Again, third space is the theoretical sphere built through an individual's ability to interrelate and intertwine with many diverse communities, thus increasing commonalities between varied populations (Whitchurch, 2008, 2009). Real or perceived boundaries have the ability to influence and construct the extending limits of the working third space. In the context of blended professional relationships, this is essential because the third space will influence with whom an individual might develop a professional connection.

As a result, one's blended professional role, specifically at St. Jerome, influences the perspective of the significance of the relationships. For example, academic librarians who manage other librarians have a more holistic view of the institutional relationships and spheres of influence, whereas the liaison librarians tend to focus more on the immediate, departmental networks. The librarians at St. Jerome have connections within a variety of spheres, though again the perceived and constructed limitations of their role inhibit their ability to maximize opportunities.

6.3.1 Managerial perspective

All four of the supervising librarians interviewed conspicuously mentioned the support staff exterior to the library as being significant. This reflects basic recommended library management strategies and reveals their concern for holistic matters regarding their libraries. "Spend time building relationships with partners, key stakeholders, and decision makers…outside your organization" (Olson & Singer, 2004, p. 105). As Maria relates, the point of enhancing and strengthening these relationships is that the alliances with exterior stakeholders allow transitions to occur and progress to be made (Whitchurch, 2009).

> Maria: They're the budget people. They're the facilities people. People that…and again, I don't want to make it sound like I'm game playing but you've got to know what side of the bread your butter is, you know? I'd say I have a good relationship with a lot of the facilities guys just because of some of the adventures that I've fallen into or projects that I've been told to take care of.

Befriending, say, the IT personnel is not politicking or game playing. It is contingency planning. It allows an organization to seamlessly progress when challenges occur. It is also important to gain support from locational influencers such as executives so that they understand what the library intends on achieving. "You will need to gain management buy-in early and often. Involve stakeholders groups in the planning" (Harriman, 2008, pp. 6–7). Therefore, developing relationships with management of exterior and lateral departments becomes important (Kaplan, 1984; Riccobono, Bruccoleri, Harrigan, & Perrone, 2014).

> Catherine: Certainly folks within the University Life and other departments like that…health services…university registrar's office, campus police, the bookstore, info desk…you know, all of those backbone folks, I would say. I don't know as well, say, the folks in my liaisons area. I don't know the facilities guys as well as my access services supervisor, who's also our campus liaison but I know them and they know me.

Without the proper development of these relationships, it becomes difficult to succeed in a constantly changing environment like that at St. Jerome. This is a universal trend, and it is incumbent upon the librarians to build these relationships because the multiplicity of the relationships effectively extends the third space in which the librarians operate.

Two of the supervisors also asserted that one of their primary roles was in the facilitation of the success of their librarians. Maria calls it "servant leadership" and the preservation of a "positive psychic environment." The premise is that her staff was professional, and it was her responsibility to create a positive working atmosphere in which those professionals could succeed.

> Maria: My job was to keep my antennae out to make sure there wasn't too much incoming or other weirdness that would put too much pressure on [them]. I make sure that they've got the platform for what they need to do. So they can jump, spin, run, skate…do what they need to do whatever they need to do within their disciplines or however their disciplines work or how their students work or their faculty or whatever so they can do their job.

The implication of this evidence is twofold. First, it indirectly refers to the factors (described here as "weirdness") that influence and define the boundaries of the librarians' third space. The managerial ideal is that they might mitigate these concerns and allow the librarians to blend further into the university community. Second, if the goal of the organization is to extend the third space boundaries of influence and increase collaboration, the minutia as well as the complex concerns must be addressed so that the individuals charged with the more complex tasks may focus their energy on those instead. It enables the self-sufficiency of the manager's workers (Whitchurch, 2009).

Managers also involve themselves in mentoring, but often, administrative responsibilities limit the amount of time that a manager may devote to such activities. For instance, one manager stated that she very much enjoyed management, but did not have the time to properly develop mentoring relationships with all members of her staff. Five librarians report to this manager. Given this assertion, it seems unlikely that the manager with 11 librarians reporting to her would have better success in this regard.

These conclusions are significant because reality may create issues with professional development because it limits the ability to conceptualize career planning

from someone who has achieved a more advanced rank. If librarian third space is seen in the vertical plane in terms of career professionalism, then the lack of mentoring may be a space-restricting complication as well. As a result, a lot of the mentoring falls to colleagues, which were the most cited significant relationships during the interviews.

6.3.2   Colleagues

Mentoring on the lateral level develops skills that enable an individual to succeed at that particular level (Bryant & Terborg, 2008; Parker, Hall, & Kram, 2008). As well, within a geographically diverse community, this type of mentoring extends boundaries and influence because individuals seek guidance from other equally-leveled collaborative partners. There is a "clear link between career success and having a mentor. Many studies provide evidence of this; their findings are fairly consistent in stating that very few individuals advance to the top administrative ranks in an organization without the help of a mentor or several mentors" (Stueart & Moran, 2007, p. 274). However, if the ambition of the librarian is to move up in the chain of command, they might fare better from the advice of individuals already in the position of leadership.

> Laura: The other liaisons have been very supportive and I learn a lot from them just watching what they do. And I would have to say that would be at a lateral level. I don't feel that way [hands mimic moving up].
> Researcher: You're talking about the library administration.
> Laura: Yes. I don't feel like…
> Researcher: Why not?
> Laura: I like the autonomy but I don't like the lack of feedback…the lack of critical constructive evaluation.

In this way, the dependence upon management becomes problematic, especially in an organization such as St. Jerome where upper-level opportunities are not abundant. As will be discussed in the third section of this chapter, a lack of prospects hindered professional development of the librarians. None of the librarians mentioned mentors exterior to their department or St. Jerome as an institution. Only three cited specific mentoring relationships among their immediate colleagues. One wonders if a lack of leadership mentoring relationships helps create this impediment. Organizational structure is also a suspect, and this will be addressed in Section 6.3 of this chapter.

On a basic level though, colleagues become the most important relationship that the librarians might have at St. Jerome because they generally interact with them on a daily basis (Smith, 2014). A positive relationship with colleagues makes the environment bearable.

> Veronica: In terms with colleagues…these are the folks that you work with and every day… so it would be more pleasant if you are on a more friendly or collegial relations with them. Otherwise it will probably be pretty horrendous to go to work every day if your goal is to avoid them at all costs.
> Researcher: So collegiality by necessity.
> Veronica: [laughs]. I guess if you were to break it down that way…well, yeah. We'll go with that.

The librarians do not always interact with members of the academic community outside the library. They may not teach a class or meet with a student on a given day, so as a result, their social interaction is with the people that they see most frequently: their coworkers. As well, given the barriers to collaboration concerning research that the librarians have experienced, the colleagues in the room or department are often the best options for joint projects. Above all, the mission of a particular department is best understood by the individuals experiencing the same environments (Lin & Fraser, 2008).

> Researcher: What aspect of those [collegial] relationships makes them significant?
> Valeria: I think we get each other. I think we're both here for a similar purpose and we both understand what the barriers are and so I feel like when we work together there is a sense of we're in this together.

The challenges and successes facing the librarians of St. Jerome are somewhat unique to their field. As a result, finding empathy in colleagues makes the daily tasks less daunting. This understanding sometimes extends to professionals in positions exterior to the library as well.

6.3.3   Nonlibrary professionals

The St. Jerome librarians asserted that the professional departmental staff "tend to get what we do a lot more than the faculty," in large part due to their service-oriented roles that created levels of social grading. As a result, "working within formal, hierarchical structures…individuals [are] also developing lateral relationships and networks" (Whitchurch, 2009, p. 409). The staff also "probably get the same brunt" of the approach from the higher-ups. Therefore, developing these lateral relationships is important because "you can build a collaborative relationship with your peers by helping them when they need help- and then asking them to return the favor" (Garfinkle, 2012, p. 4). There is a reflexive understanding, which is important at St. Jerome because of the relative pecking order.

There is a distinct hierarchy in academe, and some faculty treat support staff as subordinates. This is similar to what Laura related about a former corporate role: "I was never on the same level as a physician, or even a nurse, you know. I was a support role and support staff." Librarians have had similar experiences, again in part due to the misunderstanding of the librarians' role. The reality that librarians are in is misconstrued as the "Librarians are here to help the faculty."

The relationships with the staff can be quite fruitful and advantageous though (Garfinkle, 2012). Sofia describes one of her colleagues in a department that she works with:

> [There's] another blended professional. She's the PhD adviser for [the disciplinary program] and she and the other professional advising staff in the school have become a real sort of anchor as it were. I learn a lot from them. They sort of help me figure out…they keep me on top of what's going on with their students so opportunities for involvement. So the advising staff are actually…and I'm trying to force that in the other department because it's been so successful in [that department]…the advisers are highly educated people…multiple masters or doctorates…working in that sort of lineal role.

The terminal degree in higher education may not be sufficient to garner worth in that field. The tenure-track faculty focuses on research, and everyone in the surrounding roles becomes supportive. This creates a feeling of camaraderie among the nontenure-track entities on campus that aim primarily to serve the needs of students and faculty. As Jessica states: "We have more in common in that we tend to serve the students and the faculty and honestly they tend to be more receptive than the faculty do."

Still, these internal and external lateral relationships may not be as beneficial as they appear on the surface. When success with outreach is unsuccessful, these relationships tend to become a fallback and may lead to complacency. If the librarians perceive their boundaries of influence only extending to the departmental staff and not the faculty, it artificially creates a boundary to overcome. Outreach for a blended professional should endeavor to extend beyond the perceived limitations of the respective third space and attempt to find audience in both higher and lower levels. It is difficult to engage with, say, the faculty if the professional comfort level is only with the colleagues in the same office.

6.3.4   Faculty

Within higher education, tenure-track faculty occupy a different and elevated level of social space. As a result, developing relationships with faculty can be difficult, in part due to the issues raised in the previous section about research foundations and abilities. As well, it is difficult to portray oneself as a collaborator when the basis of the librarian's work is service. These are both socially constructed and legitimate obstacles to relationship development in the blended professional context. Yet these relationships can be quite successful.

> Gwen: I think faculty support is really important, we definitely…there's some faculty that, you know, kind of couldn't be bothered with us and don't have any interest but on the flip side we have faculty that are really, really big library proponents and always like questioning things and [are] always talking us up and kind of willing to go to bat for us.

Faculty relationships may be beneficial for professional development as well.

> Melania: I have good relationships with my faculty. They're really good and I'm proud of that. And they are important to me…when I've needed recommendations from them they've given them to me and they always acknowledge the contribution that I make.

Elizabeth cited communication as the key developer of relationships with her faculty. However, Elizabeth teaches in a discipline that is more accepting of librarian interaction and assistance, so an enhanced librarian–faculty relationship in that regard seems plausible. The lines are more open for clear objectives and communication. Extension of third space in that atmosphere is prominent and successful.

As a result, the interesting aspect of the librarian–faculty relationship was that the librarians citing those relationships as significant either work in smaller libraries at St. Jerome or taught a significant number of classes. Headway into other fields such as STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and in larger campus

environments seemingly was more difficult. A STEM librarian explained the dynamics of her relationship with the faculty in this way:

> *With the scientist aspect it's like they want to fiddle around with it first and then they'll come back to you if they need help. But for the most part, they're like hermits where it's "Let me tinker with it first. I don't need you to tell me what to do."*

Consequently, in addition to the librarians needing to overcome the realities of the representation of their service role, they also need to manage personalities in order to succeed in relationship development with their faculty. This creates an additional border for the extension of the blended professional influence.

6.3.5 Students and classified staff

Significant in the results were two categories of relationships conspicuous by their lack of mention: students and classified staff. When asked about the primary role of the academic librarian, most interviewed librarians replied by describing interactions with students. Yet only one librarian cited students as the most significant relationship.

> Susanna: To me the most important relationship is with the students because you want them to know they come and we'll help. We'll do it. It's always…I think I enjoy working with students more because they talk the field that I learned. It's always nice to have an academic conversation with people and have an academic debate. I think it's really important that I talk with them because I'm with them…my people.

For Susanna, the interaction with students provides an intellectual connectivity with the community. It is what Whitchurch (2009, p. 410) describes as the ability to "enter and understand academic discourse/debate." If the silos of the university are independent Towers of Babel, then here in these relationships, they both speak the same language. However, Susanna and all of her colleagues viewed students as patrons and not potential research partners. This perspective limits what might be the most abundant and productive partnerships available to academic librarians. The librarians in essence are ignoring potentially 34,000 research partnerships!

As well, the term "colleagues" was never meant to refer to classified staff. Many of the classified staff personnel, particularly in the research-oriented departments, have multiple master's degrees or are pursuing doctoral degrees. These staff members have research experience through both education and industry. As well, presumably the staff will benefit from academic productivity, especially if they intend to work in some facet of higher education that requires presentations or publications.

Yet the nonlibrarian staff often is not considered for partnerships on projects, so unfortunately, they are an untapped resource, therefore limiting the internal networks. These discoveries are important in relation to the blended professional model in that they present a mindset that creates an imagined professional border and again limits the third space through which the librarians might thrive by ignoring potential collaborative partnerships. It is a similar manifestation of the socially constructed and somewhat artificial hierarchy that the librarians themselves must navigate at St. Jerome and will be a component of the analysis of the organization in the next section.

6.3.6 Relationships summary

Managers have concerns supplemental to the success of their librarians. If, for example, a snake is found in a chair (this did indeed happen!), then it is beneficial to have a solid working relationship with the facilities crewmembers. Also unsurprisingly, the academic librarians at St. Jerome viewed their colleagues as the most important partnerships. Stakeholders such as faculty, students, and other classified staff were secondary considerations or complete afterthoughts when discussing significant relationships. These findings are significant because they demonstrate the creation of artificial boundaries that encumber the blended professional role. While it initially appears negative, this actuality provides substantial opportunity for outreach and professional development, which leads to the extension of third space and the blended professional role.

6.4 Legitimacies

Legitimacy is something of an abstract perception. Legitimacies can be gained through experience or innate development. For example, some of the qualifications of the librarians addressed practical matters in their ability to perform their duties. One manager stated that her knowledge of management responsibilities enabled her to succeed in her role.

> Catherine: I would have to say all of the management, whether it's time management, resource management…all that understanding of management. Whether it's making sure we meet a deadline. So getting the guideposts in place or if they use the grid or however you take that apart and put the pieces together. But I would say that management component benefits...is broadly based and bleeds into everything.

Other librarians cited personality traits as a legitimizing force in their position.

> Gwen: I think you wouldn't get this from a resume but I think I'm pretty good in terms of, I take a lot of responsibility for projects and I think I carry them through really well, but that isn't something that I think that's just more of innate quality and not something that I've attained.

Yet managerial acumen and personal drive may represent knowledges that may enable legitimacy. In the academy, letters after one's name often determine position and acceptance into various circles of influence and the third spaces that may be occupied. Again though, the findings related to the establishment of legitimacies indicate that the academic librarians at St. Jerome as blended professionals have the capacity to engage across boundaries through the provision of their services and knowledge, but their role is of a lower socially constructed rank than their tenure-track counterparts and therefore provides real hurdles that the librarians must navigate.

6.4.1 Office spaces

In order to understand the legitimacies of the academic librarians as blended professionals at St. Jerome, the physical spaces in which they work required analysis.

In terms of personal space, of all the librarians interviewed, only one had an office space that was accessible to the public within the library itself. Librarian offices at Clement V Library actually are on the second floor of the building, exterior to the library. The rest of the librarians worked in cubicles arranged in offices locked to the public. As well, librarians at Alexander VI frequently meet with students in a public space such as the reference desk because meetings in their cubicles distract coworkers.

The offices or more often cubicles themselves also are not very large. The average cubicle in the Alexander VI Library is 70 sq. ft. A GSA study (2011, p. 30) found that within academic institutions support staff were allotted between 64 and 100 sq. ft of cubicle space; administrative managers were afforded between 100 and 160 sq. ft. The librarian who is assistant head of Alexander VI Library's reference—the equivalent of an administrative manager in the study—has an 80-sq-ft cubicle. According to St. Jerome's own facilities website, administrative/professional faculty (the rank of the academic librarians) are supposed to have a private office of 120 sq. ft. Consequently in terms of space as a legitimizing factor, librarians are negatively influenced.

This observation is significant because the perception of the working space has the potential to undermine librarian legitimacy by placing them organizationally within a nonacademic working space. One of the interviewed librarians specifically cited offices for librarians as a change in a new library.

> Sofia: I would have an office with a door. You know, the first library that I worked at…the Library of Faculty…the faculty had written into their contract "Every faculty member shall have an office with contiguous walls that touch the ceiling without break and a door that locks and is contiguous with all walls. And every one of these shall have a window." They had made it so that you literally couldn't cubicalize the faculty.

The reasoning behind this request relates to both identity and productivity. To the latter, this librarian routinely arrived at the office early in order to focus on research prior to her colleagues' morning arrival and the potential distractions that accompany them. For identity, it undermines authority. Offices are status symbols and cubicles are low in the hierarchy. As Sofia contends, a proper librarian's office "would be professional like a faculty member's office. It's not behind locked doors like a staff person." If one of the primary points of outreach by the librarians is to establish a collaborative academic role within the greater academy, then the librarians may need more traditionally academic space in order to project academic professionalism and extend blended professional boundaries.

If the librarians remain in "cube-farms" for the extended future, then there is opportunity to promote legitimacies within those spaces. In the librarian's space in the Alexander VI Library, there are a lot of blank walls. There are three Employee of the Month awards hanging on the side of the first cubicle. Only two of the recipients still work for the university. There is also a team award on the same wall dating to 2009; only about 60% of the complement of librarians and staff during the time of research were affiliated with the department and therefore able to contribute to that award. The surrounding walls are blank, except for one massive 8×4 ft poster from a poster session presentation at an American Library Association conference. It is a major visual representation of research performed by librarians in the room. Nearly all members of

this cube-farm have published or presented some materials in the past. If some of these pieces are framed and placed around the room, then those that enter the room, either students, faculty, or library administration, will be able to recognize that productivity is, in fact, occurring within the department.

The most obvious means in which to establish legitimacy in an academic setting is through the exhibition of educational or specialized qualifications (Whitchurch, 2009). In order to examine how the librarians offered their academic or professional credentials, I took field notes documenting relevant materials displayed around their personal spaces. Only two librarians displayed work-related awards. Five displayed materials denoting conference attendance, of which one prominently displayed approximately 25 attendance and presenter nametags. One librarian hung a school pennant. Finally, only one librarian had her degrees framed and displayed on the wall; a second librarian had her degrees in her office, but they were not displayed.

Studies have been done on the psychological reasons behind the arrangement of office spaces; for example, a messy desk denotes creativity whereas a clean desk suggests a conventional thinker (Vohs, Redden, & Rahinel, 2013). This analysis though was more concerned with what the librarians chose to display. Family and vacation photographs were much more prominent that institutional items, perhaps due to a minimal amount of natural light in the cubicle areas (Bringslimark, Hartig, & Grindal Patil, 2011). There have long been discussions on the lack of windows in working spaces and the effects on workers (Finnegan, 1981; Taylor, 1979). During the research, Alexander VI Library was under renovation, and one of the three windows in the liaison librarian's cube-farm had been removed. Due to the ongoing construction, the blinds were almost always drawn, so it was not surprising in that the employees seek to decorate their own personal spaces.

Ultimately, there are opportunities to legitimize the working spaces of the librarians through decorations and celebrations of achievements. It is difficult to project validity in their current professional office environments. If they continue to view the "cube-farms" as a professional slight though, which they appear to believe due to the characterization of the working space during the interviews, then it will take more reformation of the spaces in order for the librarians to view their working spaces as a vehicle of their legitimacy at St. Jerome.

6.4.2 Legitimizing knowledge

Many of the responses from the librarians regarding legitimacies mimicked findings concerning knowledges. In reading these sections, pieces are repetitive, but they demonstrate that knowledge, or better yet the ability to find knowledge, is a legitimizing factor for the librarians. In order to find or acquire knowledge, individuals must navigate the available resources. In this expedition, librarians serve as their guides. That ability retained and demonstrated by the librarians has the potential to validate their overall presence in the community.

Both subject and general knowledges serve as legitimizing forces. Subject knowledge, particularly with the secondary master's, promoted legitimacy first by enabling the librarians to get their position in the field.

Veronica: I would probably say my disciplinary degree because even applying for this job… when they say "[specific discipline] preferred," I was like "If I can't even get an interview for this position then I don't think that I would have a knack for it."

The ability to "achieve credibility in academic debate/space" (Whitchurch, 2009, p. 410) is gained through specialized understanding of the knowledge field. It extends the conversational and functional space that the librarian might not otherwise encounter.

Not all of the librarians had multiple master's degrees. In these cases, experience provided additional legitimacy. Experience, which theoretically enhances knowledge, may also promote legitimacy and blend the professional role.

Laura: If I ever get to talk to anybody I can say I've been doing this for 30 years in different ways. But once you hit that you say "and I'm here to serve you. What services can I provide for you?" That's more of a qualification that's they're interested in.

Both service and experience were important factors. Knowledge gained from working in the field legitimized their sense of belonging.

Jessica: I know libraries and I have a sense of what they don't know. The problem is that they think they know everything and then they don't. Sometimes it's difficult because we're being asked to anticipate what people want and what they may need, which is a funny kind of role. I have libraries, and I have the broad picture. I have the big picture.

At the very least, all of the librarians have the general skills needed to find the basic materials and resources, with a subject specialist providing additional support. As Maria defines herself: "I'd say I'm a generalist. Bottom-line, get them started, let's get going." That mindset comes through, both the education and experience, and extends the blended professional boundaries even when a legitimizing force, such as a secondary master's, is not owned.

6.4.3   Status quo

The only segment of the legitimacies in the blended professional model that the librarians did not specifically connect with is the "challenging of the status quo" (Whitchurch, 2009, p. 410). Valeria connected it to poor marketing.

Valeria: One of the weaknesses is that we don't do a good job advocating our resources and our services. Describing why a relationship with a library or a librarian is beneficial to a student or faculty member.

Again, misunderstanding of the role of the academic librarians as blended professionals has the potential to place the librarians at St. Jerome in a tenuous third space. Since they are not faculty and have no representation on the faculty senate, they have difficulty addressing the prevailing perceptions around campus. This is an actual barrier to the blended professional abilities of the librarians, and this structuring might have consequences for the longevity of the position.

Valeria: I think it's probably always been important that libraries promote themselves but I think it's now more so than ever with the advent of the internets…as we call them. I mean, that's how this program with the development office came about. The development officer

stated "I can't believe we still have a library. Who needs it? Isn't that what Google's for?" And that's what started this whole process. There's just a lot of thinking like that out there.

Therefore, not only do the librarians at St. Jerome need to market themselves, but they require outreach to demonstrate the viability of their institution in the digital age. Contrary to popular belief, Google is not the most effective tool for a researcher (Behrends, 2012). When officer-level members of one's own institution begin to question the value of a library, it becomes exceedingly difficult to promote change within the institution. The librarians interviewed in this study tended to think of themselves in the traditional and conservative role and hesitated to become movers and shakers. Thus, the librarians at St. Jerome are blended professionals, but the limitations of their perceptive positions inhibit their ability to counter prevailing ideologies and perceptions of worth at their institution. This perception may prevent them from thinking and acting "outside of the box" that is their constructed third space. The librarians therefore somewhat unwittingly define their own workable third space by placing or accepting artificial professional boundaries around their role.

In part, social presentation may play a role in the librarians' ability to challenge the status quo. Only one of the four managers wore jeans to the meeting with me. However, 10 of the other 13 librarians wore jeans to the interview, including every librarian working at the Alexander VI Library. This observation was informal. I did not request nor expect the librarians to dress in business casual attire for the interviews. As well, the meetings also took place during the summer session, when dress codes seem to relax.

Still, professional appearance has been shown to affect perception (Keenum, Wallace, & Barger Stevens, 2003) and career promotional prospects (Haigh, 2013). At least one interview took place on every weekday (Monday through Friday), so the relaxed dress cannot be discounted as a "casual Friday" phenomenon. Many librarians spoke of management aspirations though, and three of the four managers interviewed wore business casual attire. Formalizing the dress code might enhance individual and collective legitimacies of the librarians and extend their blended professional boundaries. If they perceive their roles as requiring more professional attire, then perhaps they will interpret their position within the academy in a more legitimized light.

I also examined the professional business cards of the librarians. Nine of the librarians listed their degrees and certifications after their names, including all but one of the librarians at Alexander VI Library. Only one of the remaining eight librarians—all from different libraries—listed their credentials. Part of the siloing between the libraries, specifically cited by Lucy, dealt with the perception that Alexander VI librarians displayed a snobbish attitude toward their counterparts in the other libraries. The hegemonic business cards did not necessarily dispel this contention.

As well, when degrees were listed on the card and the librarian had a secondary master's, the library science degree always was listed second. Some librarians appreciated the pragmatic and professional understanding that the degree provided.

> Ava: I do think the MLS is helpful because I guess I have more of an understanding about how libraries work in the grand scheme of things. It opened my eyes to different modes of learning, different ways of accessing information. So I think in my job that benefits me a lot.

Others were less enthusiastic about the library science degree's ability to promote legitimacy. As Laura states: "I don't think anybody's impressed with an MLS. Pffffh." Indeed, the librarians viewed the subject master's as more important in this regard than the MLS.

> Susanna: I think actually my [disciplinary] degree benefits me the most because I feel like it opens more doors for me than the librarian degree. Because I feel like…if I just had a librarian degree I wouldn't be able to get positions that I care that much about. But because I have the [disciplinary] degree I feel that I have more opportunities to do things that are more interesting to me.

This perception is important because it seems evident that even though the library science degree was the "handshake that got them in the door," the disciplinary expertise held greater esteem and opened other doors and spaces around the academic community.

Therefore, in order for the librarians to effectively challenge the status quo and overarching perceptions of who they are and what they do, it seems that the librarians with formalized disciplinary backgrounds have the best opportunity to flourish. The librarians' established third space limits the likelihood of success in this regard. However, these librarians with multiple degrees have the blended professional traits concerning knowledges that will open doors and provide an audience through which improved legitimacy might be established.

6.4.4   Legitimacies summary

Presuming that the physical offices of the academic librarians at St. Jerome represent their status in the institution, then their legitimacy as blended professionals in the university community may be diminished. The findings demonstrate that while disciplinary backgrounds and degrees open more doors for the librarians, emphasizing these skills inadvertently marginalizes the expertise of the librarian. Yet, while experience or ability to find materials enables the librarian to gain audience with the academic community, their disciplinary knowledge or degree fosters the acceptance.

6.5   Conclusion

In spite of gap-shrinking opportunity provided by technological innovations, geography develops physical and cultural silos throughout the library system, which are perpetuated by the marketing shortcomings of the academic librarians themselves. The librarians are adept at finding and interpreting knowledge, especially in their respective fields, a key and unique function of the librarians in higher education; yet they often underutilize and undervalue their own research, thereby contributing to the misunderstanding of their roles. The librarians, perhaps due to the third space that they occupy or accept, value their colleagues and underappreciate other collaborative avenues, mitigating the true efficacy of their blended role. They are able to "speak the language," but their lack of advanced or doctoral level skills limits their ultimate

acceptance and relegates them to a professional third space that is a perceived rung below the faculty at the institution.

Yes, the data collected suggests and demonstrates that the academic librarians at St. Jerome are blended professionals. However, the unique combination of their roles, their perceptions of those roles, places them into a unique third space developed by perceived boundaries that are balanced between the tenure-track faculty and the students. They are fixed in the middle of the hierarchy that is academe at St. Jerome, and this space creates many obstacles to their professional success. These challenges are where the next chapter commences.

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