

Obstacles to professional success

7

Chapter 6, “[The academic librarian as blended professional](#),” discussed how perceptions of the academic librarians’ role created a unique third space. Working within this constructed third space creates a blended professional identity for the academic librarians at St. Jerome. The data obtained additionally found acknowledged obstacles related to their professional success and development as blended professionals.

This was a chapter that I struggled to write during the research process because I kept projecting my own expectations on the librarians. When you hear complaints about lack of time and money, for instance, it is easy to compare the complaints to your own experiences. During the course of this research, I worked two jobs (one full-time and one part-time), while at the same time, I studied in graduate school. In the libraries, I made far less money than any of the librarians and still had professional academic aspirations and expectations. I was in the same system but lower down on the totem pole, so to speak. So for me, I at first was offended somewhat by these findings. During the revision process, I received a great deal of feedback that illustrated how incorrect my initial mindset had been.

Obviously my original approach is a disservice to the interviewed librarians because it simultaneously dampens their voice when a primary goal of this type of exercise is to provide a venue for them to speak and be heard. As well, I was not walking in the librarians’ shoes, either professionally or personally. These were interviews, but they were not comprehensive life stories where the librarians revealed everything about themselves. I am sure that some of them had struggles far greater than I could have imagined from my semiblinded vantage point. Therefore, I encourage you as researchers who might use this model for your own purposes to step back and consider the individuals behind the perceived identities.

Regardless, when compared with the data from the chapter “[The academic librarian as blended professional](#)”, the additional consideration does not change the results. Instead, the supplementary layer of information amplifies the difficulties that the academic librarians at St. Jerome experience as blended professionals by creating extra difficulties to navigate in their professional roles.

Thematically, three distinct obstacles to the librarians’ success in the blended professional model arose during the interviews: time and money (or compensation), gender, and organization. Again, these impediments were at times artificially created through perception, but in other instances, the concerns were very real and tangible. The problem with contrived obstacles is that they may have the same effect as real limitations if the individual perceiving them allows the issue to affect how they function.

[Fig. 7.1](#) represents the categories of obstacles to professional development of the academic librarians at St. Jerome. Chapter “[The academic librarian as blended professional](#)” established that the blended professional identity of academic

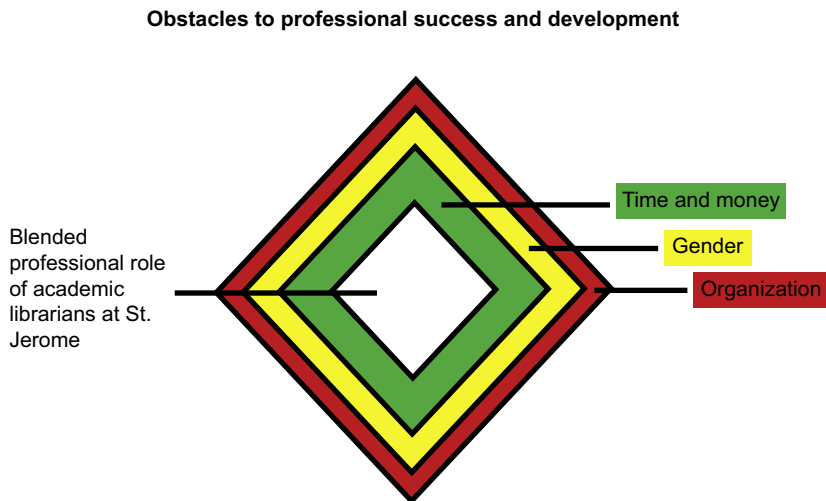


Figure 7.1 This figure symbolizes impediments for librarians as blended professionals to success and development. The working third space of the academic librarians is in the center, surrounded by additional obstacles. The boundaries indicate the severity of the obstacle, with the innermost being perceptually the least serious and the outermost being the most difficult.

librarians and categorized the boundaries of their unique, working third space. Further fencing surrounds this identity, creating supplemental difficulties to the blended role.

The additional obstacles in [Fig. 7.1](#) are categorized by their basis in reality. Analysis of the data suggests that time and money are perceived impediments. The librarians believe that they exist so that perception affects how the librarians view their positions. However, since they are supposed instead of actual concerns, these might be alleviated with dissemination of comparative data.

Gender as an obstacle is not black and white. While some of the librarians viewed aspects of their gender as impacting their ability to do their job effectively, the sentiments were not universal. Gender perception has the ability to hamper the professional development of the individual if they consider their gender an influencing factor, but not all librarians may consider—either deliberately or subconsciously—gender as an obstacle. Yet bias is real. The historical overview in the chapter “[Historical roles](#)” documented the challenges facing women in the higher education workplace. Female librarians face this reality every day, whether they acknowledge it or not. Therefore, gender as an obstacle balances between perceived and real.

The structure of an organization is more concrete as an obstacle. The librarians have the ability as blended professionals to maneuver between different social environments interior and exterior to the library, but organizational policies, practices, and procedures truly impede the librarians’ effectiveness in their endeavors. The following chapter begins by analyzing the perceived complaints about time and money, transitions to a discussion on gender, and then concludes with an analysis of the organizational complications and impediments that act as a definitive hindrance to the librarian role.

7.1 Time and money

The absence of time to complete their required duties as blended professionals and a lack of funding or compensation to undertake said activities arose frequently during the course of the interviews. Of the concerns raised by the librarians regarding the obstacles to their professional development, time and money seemed to be the most straightforward to address in a reasonable discussion because the limitations they produce in this particular environment are artificial in creation. Time and compensation may be limited for the academic librarians of St. Jerome. However, their situation is not terrible, especially when compared to the tenure-track faculty (or librarians in over settings); still, the librarians think that it is, and this generates an artificial obstacle.

7.1.1 Time

Time was overwhelmingly cited as an obstacle to the professional success. However, the activities of the librarians at St. Jerome must be considered prior to making an assessment on demands on their time. Bridget defines their role as “reference, instruction, collection development, [and] outreach.” Since the administration is also emphasizing research, that enterprise becomes another facet of their position.

The fact that the administration is promoting academic professionalism creates a shift in the librarians’ initial role at St. Jerome. “The outputs librarians are measuring are not directly associated with specific practices that lead to improved lives for the people we serve. If we cannot make that connection, we have no way of knowing how well we are doing our jobs” (Bonfield, 2014). The librarians at St. Jerome were hired to provide reference services to the university community. Publication was not significant in this task, despite the current interpretation of the Librarians’ Handbook by the present administration. The standard duties of the librarians have remained similar (reference desk shifts, individual consultations, instruction, collection development, etc.).

Valeria: The idea that you could ask a librarian that’s responsible for a collection, a service desk, a building that may be open 24 hours a day (which it is at most libraries these days) and to ask them to publish in the same way in which you would ask someone on a 9-month appointment. That doesn’t make sense.

The added expectation of research requires supplementary time for such productivity, which was something often cited as an obstacle to professional success because they are still expected to perform the outreach required by a blended professional, but the added job requirements limit that ability.

The librarians at St. Jerome have the opportunity to apply for up to 10 days of research leave per year. However, even when they receive the additional leave, they have difficulty scheduling absences from their desks.

Lucy: I’ve got research leave but I can’t figure out when to take it because when you get back you have all these things, you know, that...especially when faculty are often building their courses during the summer for fall or spring delivery. Luckily I just got a new staff person, but somebody has to train him. I can’t just go on leave for a week when he’s new so it’s tricky because the research leave is supposed to be the way to solve this but no one covers your responsibilities when you’re on research leave.

Clearly, some librarians think that research time is hard to obtain. The traditional time for research is often during the summer. However, the American Library Association's Annual Conference is always scheduled at the end of June, a few weeks after the spring semester ends. This allows the librarians to make travel plans and last minute research adjustments if they are presenting at that conference. Marketing and preparation for outreach also takes up a considerable amount of time in the summer, as librarians attend orientations multiple times per week for most of June, July, and August. There are other ad hoc issues, such as assisting faculty in their development of course reserve materials and preparing online tutorials and webinars for the upcoming semester. In short, summer is already a demanding time for the librarians at St. Jerome.

Even so, it is difficult to quantify the librarians' duties and time management. Again, it *appears* to be less than what is expected by the tenure-track faculty.

Researcher: In terms of time, do you think the amount of time that's expected for a librarian is similar to what's expected for your [academic discipline's] field?

Sofia: [laughter].

Researcher: Okay.

Sofia: No. [laughter] Not even close.

Consider first instruction. Tenure-track faculty instruction is more time-consuming and substantive than all manner of instruction taught by academic librarians, particularly at St. Jerome. Susanna relates:

The difference is that I don't do as much [work as tenure-track]. My sessions are only 30 minutes long and they don't happen very often. I feel like they spend a lot more time and effort figuring out and organizing how they're going to set up the session, how they're going to set up their courses, their syllabi, and things like that. Whereas it takes me maybe a couple hours to figure out a lesson plan for an instruction session.

The differences exist for varied reasons. First, the resources and generic information covered for the librarian instruction sessions rarely change. The librarian will demonstrate usage of the resources available to the students, specifically library catalog(s), periodical database, electronic journals, research portals, and material acquisition. This formulaic aspect of the instruction means that a librarian will not have to spend an inordinate amount of time preparing for each individual class.

One librarian estimated that she taught 30 classes in a semester, which could include 20 min to 3 hour sessions. This librarian was in the top three librarians at St. Jerome in terms of courses taught. Therefore, her in-class instruction time was significantly higher than some of her peers. For an estimate, let us say that the average class length for this librarian was 1.5 hours. If the librarian spent 1 hour preparing for each of those classes, this would equate to 75 hours a semester spent in the classroom teaching ((30 classes × 1.5 hours class time) + 30 hours preparation time).

In contrast, consider for example an instructor teaching Western Political Theory as a seminar that meets weekly for 3 hours. The material for each course changes as the course topically progresses. One week may be spent reading Machiavelli, whereas the following week, Rousseau may be the focus of discussion. This necessitates continual

preparation. In fact, the American Faculty Association (AFA) estimates that an instructor should prepare 2–4 hours per 1 hour of class time taught (American Faculty Association, 2012). As Irene succinctly says: “Yes, I may do instruction but in a whole year I may teach the same class 44 times whereas the instructor is teaching three classes every semester, so the preps are different.” Therefore, for a 15 week seminar course, that equates to between 135 and 225 hours a semester devoted to classroom teaching (Classroom Time (1 class \times (15 weeks \times 3 hours)) + Preparation Time ((1 class \times (15 weeks \times 3 hours)) \times 2 (or 4)). If the faculty member is teaching two or more classes, then that time is doubled or tripled.

Even if one considers the reference consultation time into the total instruction statistics, the librarian time spent teaching still falls short of the tenure-track faculty. The librarians at Alexander VI Library average about 30 consultations per semester. If a generous estimate of 1 hour per consultation and a very generous 1 hour of preparation time is allotted, then the librarians spend 60 additional hours per semester in this instructional capacity. This amounts to 135 hours of librarian instruction time per semester (75 classroom instruction hours + 60 consultation hours). If a tenure-track faculty is teaching three classes in a semester, then they will devote to instruction between 270 and 540 hours based on AFA estimates. Time-wise, library instruction and tenure-track instruction are two different animals.

However, reference and instruction are the only two of those activities to which a reasonable calculation of time may be applied. For those two activities, they are in a fixed location for a specific amount of time. In contrast, librarians might schedule time for collection development or outreach, but the productivity of the time spent (books purchased and appointments scheduled) does not necessarily reflect the time and effort placed into the enterprise.

Research is the most nebulous of the activities. Collecting relevant materials for a literature review constitutes research, and the time spent could vary, depending upon the difficulty of the process of acquiring those materials. Organization, composition, and editing of research articles and writing varies depending upon the individual. Therefore, it is difficult to effectively estimate the amount of time librarians actually spend on their daily research activities aside from counting the number of citations listed in the quarterly *University Librarian's Newsletter*. In 2013, the liaison librarians in the Alexander VI Library collectively published two articles.

Many of the librarians telework, either on a scheduled day or unplanned, based upon the need for them to be physically present on campus. There has been research that suggests that teleworking increases productivity by eliminating in-office distractions (Manley, 2002; Pace, 2004) and aids in the retention of staff (Smith & Van Dyke, 2008). The potential for distraction might be higher than that for the tenure-track, given their office arrangements. A tenure-track faculty member may shut their office door for privacy; the same level of seclusion is difficult in a “cube-farm.” Therefore, teleworking does make logistical sense.

Conversely, teleworking might be less successful in developing staff relationships (Fay & Kline, 2011), and attitude toward the job directly influences productivity (Neufeld & Fang, 2005). “The common fear among...the managers is that without the vigilant eye of a supervisor or the snoopy gaze of a coworker, what typical employee is not going

to resist the temptation to sleep late, watch television, take naps, snack often, and quit early” (Manley, 2002, p. 124). It was difficult to gauge the productivity of the librarians at St. Jerome who telework, especially from where I worked. While the librarians might send productivity reports to their supervisors, these were not public documents.

I also am not a proponent of teleworking because I have seen and heard of it being abused in a variety of settings. For example, in my current job, there is one (nonlibrarian) staff member who wears a Fitbit fitness tracker that counts the number of steps that she makes in a day. The device is linked to other members at the university who also use the tool so that friends and colleagues might see each other’s numbers and collectively motivate themselves. The staff member routinely surpasses step numbers impossible to achieve in a small house while “teleworking.” In short, there is no chance that this person actually is working from home. Given that this is a somewhat biased example, a wholesale damnation of the teleworkers seems a bit out of place.

However, specific to my own experience within libraries, I have worked in a number of organizations where librarians teleworked. In one instance, the librarians would telework in order to work on their research articles, yet no articles would ever materialize and be published. It is possible that publishable research was being conducted by the librarians and it simply never made it past the peer review process, but when telework was mentioned, there was a roll of the eyes from those librarians’ colleagues that indicated the telework did not constitute substantial effort by those using that work option.

Admittedly though, the illustration of these stories in combination with my own informal observations of the librarians at St. Jerome biases my opinions, particularly concerning usage of time. I am sure that some or all of you might relate. For every instance that I saw a librarian working late or on a weekend, there is another where I walked past a cubicle and noticed mahjong being played on a desktop computer.

In order to obtain an improved, more impartial understanding of how the librarians were utilizing their time, I examined the librarians’ schedules for the week of Monday, September 22, 2014, through Friday, September 26, 2014. I then compiled and tabulated the activities. The results are displayed in [Table 7.1](#).

Given the fluctuation in instruction assignments, the week was chosen at random during the fall semester. The statistic that stands out is the final one: miscellaneous/unscheduled. The assumption from the researcher was that the librarians each worked a 40-hour week during the examined time. As seen in [Table 7.1](#), only about 30% of their days were formally scheduled; the rest of the time was open. Perhaps during that 70% of their time, a random student or faculty member visited for a research consultation, but it represents a lot of unplanned time from individuals who stated that they had little time to spare. Conceivably, a more in-depth analysis of the librarians’ usage and scheduling of their time, either by the individual librarians or management, might illuminate more open time to engage in activities such as research.

In the end, how one views their role may do more to influence their productivity than any external factor. The perception of the impediment creates an artificial boundary that renders blended professional activity less effective. For example, many librarians view the librarian role as subservient to the faculty place in the campus hierarchy. As Laura states: “Yes, I am definitely a support role to tenured faculty...I really do see it as a support role and not on the same level.” There is nothing that legislates this as

Table 7.1 The percentages here represent the amount of a 40-hour workweek spent in the described activity

Activity	Time spent in activity (%)
Reference desk	8.5
IM	1.4
Teaching in library classroom	2.8
Teaching in nonlibrary classroom	1.6
Office hours	3.9
Training staff	0.7
Professional development	3.2
Meetings	7.5
Miscellaneous/unscheduled	70.4

fact. Yet the librarians accept this position because they believe it to be accurate. This mentality creates the belief that the librarians should not perform similar activities, regardless of ability, as faculty because it is not their perceived role in the university. This, in turn, limits the librarians' success as blended professionals because it constructs boundaries on their sphere of influence. A lack of time is ultimately just an excuse that manifests from this accepted perception.

The academic librarians, once they become fully cognizant of the situation, have the choice of whether to let a perceived lack of time undermine their professional successes. On the other hand, success, as Sofia relates, can be an alternative choice.

Sofia: So the idea that time...do you have time? Bullshit. If you have to do it, you do it and that's it. But for me, the thing that made me so flip was I didn't have to do this. Why do I have to do this? I didn't need a second degree. I could have been a stay at home mom. I choose to do these things. I don't have to publish articles in my field. I don't have to see if I can get my book out. I don't really have to do ALA stuff. I could do something much more micro. I choose to do all of it. I also exercise. Regularly. And have hobbies that aren't exercise and do those. How? Because my day has 48 hours, thank you. I actually live in a space time warp thing.

Researcher: I understand.

Sofia: Yeah. So the time thing, I get...and especially because of the pressures on research and instruction faculty. Our job is not even remotely equivalent. Not even remotely equivalent.

Clearly the academic librarians at St. Jerome do not expect to produce at the level of their tenure-track counterparts. If librarians had a better holistic perspective of how their counterparts spend their time, then the librarians' perspective might be altered. Acknowledging this notion will help break down a wall and amplify the blended abilities of the academic librarians within the St. Jerome community.

7.1.2 Money

Financial concerns occasionally entered into the organizational level, such as with insufficient funds to order proper marketing and outreach materials. However, the lack

of personal financial backing to do their strongly encouraged professional academic pursuits was an oft-cited complaint of the librarians. “Go publish. Go present. Here’s 50% of what you need.” It led to some amusing conversation.

Susanna: Money is the most significant obstacle. Because everything else is pretty easy, especially if you’re thinking of professional development terms for a librarian. As long as you can afford it, you’re golden. But...

Researcher: Can you afford to go to as many conferences as you want?

Susanna: Noooo...no I can’t. I get really...I get...this is really sad and pathetic. I convince my parents sometimes to go on vacation in the towns where my conferences will be as a way to save money so that I don’t have to pay for housing.

Many librarians extended their conference travel into vacations. As Julia states: “There’s nothing wrong with going on a conference and building in a little vacation but it still costs a lot of money to essentially go somewhere where I wouldn’t choose to go.” Strategically planning conference attendance became a prime tactic. Attending a conference in Las Vegas, NV, during the middle of the summer or Boston, MA, during the dead of winter were not popular choices but instead necessities due to the scheduling of national conferences.

Admittedly though, there are some concerns with the way that money is allotted for travel. Due to preferences from the administration, librarians stated that they generally would receive more money to attend a disciplinary conference instead of a library conference. As well, more money was allotted to present at a conference than to just attend. The distance of travel also influenced compensation. Aside from that, there did not appear to be any standard disbursement of travel monies. Therefore, an academic librarian presenting a paper at a disciplinary conference would stand a greater chance of receiving significantly more financial backing than the librarian merely attending a library-oriented conference across the country.

This manner of money distribution placed the librarians in a bind concerning academic professionalism. Most of the librarians did not have the academic aptitude to present at disciplinary conferences. If the librarians conducted research, then it most likely would be offered at a library conference, thereby garnering lower financial support. In this way, the deck was stacked against librarians being afforded maximum funding for professional development in the form of conference attendance, much to the librarians’ chagrin.

The assumption from many of the librarians was that the expectation for publications and presentations from the administration was not matched with monetary compensation.

Lucy: So that can be really challenging because how can you ask people to present and to further themselves professionally by going to conference and presenting and you’re not going to pay them and [what] they make... isn’t bad depending on where you live, but isn’t like a lot.

Researcher: It’s less than tenure-track faculty?

Lucy: Yes, definitely. No matter where you live it’s less than tenured faculty.

In reality, however, there is not a significant variance. The Bureau of Labor Statistics listed the median compensation for postsecondary instructors in the United States as \$68,970 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2014). A whistleblower website in the state that St. Jerome operates lists the salaries of all state employees. In 2011, the average salary of

the librarians interviewed for this project was \$62,057. Therefore, the academic librarians at St. Jerome were only making about 10% less than their tenure-track counterparts.

What about travel stipends? The travel allotment from the university forces librarians to make decisions about which conferences to attend. As Lucy states: “We get travel but the way it’s done here we never get the full amount. And if you ask for two things, you get each partially, but very partially so that you almost have to decide which one to take.” However, this assumes that the tenure-track faculty receive a significant amount of travel money. At St. Jerome, the maximum award for conference travel for tenure-track faculty is \$500, although some individual departments offset the cost with additional financial support. It is similar at their peer institutions. For example, at Florida State University, the maximum is \$1500. It should be noted that the librarians at St. Jerome are strongly encouraged to present and publish, but it is not required. Tenure-track does not have the luxury of choice in this regard.

Consider as well the cost of investment. The National Center for Educational Statistics lists the average tuition and required fees at public institutions in the 2009–10 academic year as \$8763; at private institutions, the tuition and fees were \$20,368 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2011). It takes ~2 years of full-time study to complete the credits required for the library science master’s degree. A PhD or equivalent doctorate needed for tenure-track employment takes at least 5 years. Two years at a public institution would run a student \$17,526; 5 years in the public system would cost \$43,815. If the doctoral student is not being subsidized through a research stipend, then they will have many more loans to pay upon completion of their program, which will also occur 3 or more years after a librarian may have entered the workforce.

Ultimately, compensation should not be perceived as a limitation to a blended professional role or professional development, as there are low-cost means to build legitimacies and other facets of the model. For example, many academic journals require little or no publication fee. The lack of produced research, for any of the variety of previously mentioned reasons, is the true obstacle to professional success in this context, not the lack of compensation.

7.1.3 Time and money summary

Tenure-track faculty might not have a substantially better financial situation than their librarian counterparts. Based upon the estimated time spent during instruction covered earlier, they almost certainly have less time. Many of the perceptions of the librarians appear based upon assumption, particularly that tenure-track faculty are significantly more compensated. It might not be fully appreciated because the librarians are being asked to perform more tenure-track associated duties in addition to their blended professional. However, similar to the issues regarding a lack of time, a better understanding of the totality of the financial situation at the university might demonstrate that money is not as unique a concern to the academic librarians as they might believe. Neither concern realistically should obstruct the academic librarians’ roles as blended professionals. Addressing these perceptions either individually or through the counsel of management may alleviate some of the artificially created boundaries impeding the academic librarians’ blended professional role and career development.

7.2 Gender

Gender is not a consideration featured in the blended professional model. This might be in part due to the fact that a woman's role in the working world has evolved past the expected jobs of teacher or nurse (Boyd, 2009). No one is suggesting that there is equality in the workplace. Even if I believed that there was equal footing in the profession, which I most assuredly do not, as a reasonable, male researcher, I do not believe that I could make an effective argument that would even be considered as valid.

Yet Whitchurch considered the model in an age when gender did not have as severe of a restriction on professional opportunities. Additionally, the questions fielded by the librarians during the interviews pertained to the blended professional model's characteristics and generic professional roles and challenges. During the course of the interviews, I never asked a question along the lines of "How does being female affect your professional opportunities?"

Still, during the proposal stage of this project and prior to the start of the interviews, the expectation was that gender identity would come up in the course of conversation much more frequently than it did. It is possible that my identity as a male researcher made the topic less comfortable for the female interviewees to talk about. As well, while age of the interviewees was not asked, for the most part, the more veteran librarians voiced their concerns about gender more regularly than their younger counterparts. Yet, during the analysis of the interviews, I did begin to understand that some of the conversations regarding gender manifested in different, less explicit forms, all of which created additional professional hurdles for a blended professional to clear.

The librarians already occupied a unique third space as blended professionals at St. Jerome. Their place within the structure of the university was determined by their respective blended professional abilities, and these relative attributes, in combination with perceived limitations, provided the boundaries of the libraries blended role. The additional consideration of gender placed an extra fence around their sphere of influence.

7.2.1 *Age and appearance*

Some aspects of an individual's identity may be acknowledged and potentially modified if it is deemed negative or a severe inhibition. For example, the predilection toward introversion previously mentioned might be viewed as a limitation due to the restriction on the ability of the librarian to market their resources. One librarian offered the suggestion of putting small headshots on the library marketing materials sent out to the various departments. This way, the faculty and students of the department will have a means to attach a name and a face, even without the need for the sometimes difficult social interaction.

I made this suggestion to some of the librarians, and it was met with mixed reactions. My immediate assumption was that those librarians who objected to the idea were making the decision due to vanity reasons, which I had witnessed in practice before. For instance, as opposed to university-supplied headshots, some librarians represented themselves as caricatures or other fabricated images on their personal

webpages. This is a normal practice, observed all the time in the form of social media avatars. However, another librarian pointed out that they felt uncomfortable having their picture available due to the risk of unwanted, potentially dangerous attention. There was a history of public patronage bothering some of the librarians in some of the libraries at St. Jerome. This is not something that I would have considered as a male, but it is legitimately a concern for the female librarians.

Other aspects are more ingrained within the individual, such as of the gender identity of the person. For some of the interviews, gender was not specifically mentioned as an obstacle to professional success, but it appeared unspoken in other conversations. For example, age and appearance seemed to emerge in conversations contextually associated with gender.

Susanna stated that she was more comfortable interacting within the student crowd as opposed to faculty. "I feel intimidated by faculty, whereas with students...I guess I see myself as a student more often than not. I feel more comfortable working in that kind of environment." Susanna is still a student and seemingly never transitioned from that role to an equal collaborator with faculty members. At the same time though, she is also one of the youngest librarians interviewed. Age also was perceived as a negative in advancement.

Gwen: As someone who's younger in this profession...I feel like it's not so easy. I had a lot of friends that really wanted to work in academic libraries and couldn't get those jobs and so work in public libraries and that's kind of where they are now. So I feel like the profession is skewed against younger people. I know for a fact [that it is] in this particular organization.

It must be acknowledged that there is a notable dearth of open positions. Three of the four upper management positions at St. Jerome (to which Gwen might advance) have remained filled by the same individual for at least 15 years. The connection with gender and Gwen's perceptions arises from the social dynamic in management mentioned by another colleague.

Lucy: And it was hard too because some of the librarians that worked with me ended up working for me and that was hard because some of them were males my father's age. And it was very hard to be their supervisor because they had no respect for...you know, "You're young. And you're female. Why should I listen to you?" So I'm sure that it happens in almost every field, but it's almost ironic that it happens in the librarian field because we're female dominated. This should be no surprise to males that become librarians that they will have a female boss at one point.

A portion of that experience derives from age and learning to manage one's elders in the workplace. However, the gender of the subordinate employees might not be considered if the manager was male.

All the same, appearance does affect professional perceptions. Based upon her appearance, one librarian received a unique welcoming into an instruction session.

Lucy: [In my previous job] there were a lot more males. I was the business librarian and it was hard at first. When I first started, a lot of the business faculty had been there for a long time. I called them the "Gray Beards" because I couldn't tell them apart. They all wore gray beards, I swear. And they were all middle-aged, white men and it was very homogenous. And they did not want to have much to do with me.

I probably shouldn't tell you this, but I went into a class once and the professor was like "Little girl? Little girl? I think you're in the wrong room." Yes, I did look young

for my 28 years, but it's mortifying being told that in front of a class when you're coming in to do instruction for his class.

Even physical presence during presentations may put women in a precarious position. Taller women make more money (Sinberg, 2009), as do individuals with lower voices (van Vugt, 2013).

Adele: Now that I'm thinking about it the majority of places that I've been the chairs have been male.

Researcher: Why do you think?

Adele: Because we live in a sexist society? Yeah, I would say it probably relates to the gender bias anyway. And sometimes I'm guilty of it too, you know, when I talk about the authority that goes along with the male voice versus the female voice. Just thinking of the Chronicle of Higher Education article that came out years ago where they were talking about women with deeper voices earn more respect just naturally in the classroom or in the administrative setting. Researcher: It could be appearances too. I mean, if both you and I are dressed in...we're standing in front of a room. I'm a lot taller than you. My voice is a lot deeper.

Adele: It is and I kick myself too, but I'm guilty of it on occasion too. I think there is something engrained either if you want to say it's socialized or learned behavior. There is something to that I think.

Appearance can almost be a double-edged sword for women in the workplace. Studies have shown that if they gain weight, they will make less money (Sinberg, 2009). "Being very attractive can especially make it difficult when it comes to co-workers who might have assumptions as to how you got your job, which means that you have to work even harder to prove yourself" (Madell, 2014). One case cited a Harvard librarian who was passed over for 13 promotions on the grounds that she was too pretty (Nicole, Sheppard, Irish, & Spence, 2006).

Being male, it is difficult for me as the researcher to fully grasp the experiences and perceptions of the interviewed librarians regarding gender, age, and appearance, especially when the findings were connected sometimes through my own interpretations of unspoken intimations. All four who specified those three factors (gender, age, and appearance) are under 40 years of age. Without having a qualified rating system, the women all look their ages. It seemed that the confluence of their age and gender inhibited their perceived values in the workplace. Since they *thought* that it affected their production, so it, in fact, actually did.

Additionally, the phrase "I probably shouldn't tell you this but..." came up in various forms during a lot of conversations. It was as if they felt like they were gossiping, and that was somehow wrong because female gossipers have a negative stigma in the workplace (Farley, Timme, & Hart, 2010). That conceptualization itself is a form of gender bias; in casual conversations, men "converse," whereas women are said to "gossip." Lucy defined the social interactions as potentially malevolent.

I think as far as gender goes the department that I work with that are more mixed seem to work better. And that seems like a very un-feminist thing to say, but it seems like if there's more balance between men and women in the library there's better results. My experience has been that reference departments that were exclusively or almost exclusively female were very catty. So there's that...at least in the profession there's that reputation, you know?

Gossip has been suggested as a customary tool of female aggression in social settings (McAndrew, 2014; Miller-Ott & Kelly, 2013). The librarians at Alexander VI were described as very “clique-y” in a negative connotation by their counterparts at the other libraries. According to the most senior members of the staff there, the department always has had a female majority. It is difficult to say how much gender has an influence on this reputation, although colleagues at other libraries apparently believe that it contributes to the atmosphere there.

7.2.2 *Ingrained learning*

Characteristics may be ingrained and learned in addition to being perceived both professionally and through formal educational experiences. For example, to many faculty, the role that the librarians have is of a glorified graduate assistant.

Jessica: As we were being taught by our senior librarians...about how to be a liaison, how to act...we, the librarians, were supposed to be [the faculty’s] academic handmaidens. “Anything we can do for you. Anything we can get.”

Compound this ideology with the traditional view of women in service (Johnson, 2013; Wilson, 2014) within the workforce, and the librarians are almost automatically placed in a tenuous spot.

Laura: I know that there’s a role that we can serve but I really do see it as a support role and not on the same level.

Researcher: Okay, so more hierarchical?

Laura: Yeah. And that’s gender related by the way.

Researcher: Why would you say that?

Laura: Because, you know, unfortunately the idea of woman being of service and being in a service profession.

This data is significant because it seemingly indicates that gender influence on place in this context reemphasizes the service focus and resulting blended professional sphere of influence described by the librarians at St. Jerome. In this professional case, the limitations created by external factors and interpretations of the librarians’ role by the faculty impede their blended professional influence and confine their third space. This ideology again is perceived and not legislated. In fact, the administration is pushing collaboration with faculty, which is antithetical to the handmaiden role, since it promotes partnership and not subordination.

Educational opportunities also are often divided from an early age. As a consequence of sex differentiation, “the girl...does not learn to assert herself, has not studied science, technology and ‘heavy’ craft [and]...is primarily handicapped in the [labor] market, because she lacks the skills which lead to higher-paying jobs” (Delamont, 1990, p. 4). These behaviors begin in grade school and then persist within higher education (Huhman, 2012). Interactions between the librarians and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) faculty often perpetuated a service or subordinate role.

Jessica: There’s still a lot of weird gender stuff outside the libraries. When I [worked with STEM faculty], you know, I think there was a weird gender thing going on with the male

faculty members. “Oh, you. You do my work for me.” I’ve had strange expectations from library users about what we would do for them. Every so often, it’s a little weird.

Due to a lack of numbers, women in the sciences do not often have a position of authority. In 2010, women represented only 28% of the workforce in engineering and the sciences (Neuhauser, 2014). There is a notion of gender equality in education that attempts to provide equal footing for women and men from an early age.

Gender equality in education not only implies that both girls and boys have equal access to schooling, but also that the process of education provides all girls and boys with a range of equal opportunities and experiences for expanding their capacities to the fullest potentials in a manner that they are able to contribute to the making of a just, responsible and compassionate society.

Jha, Page, and Raynor (2009, p. 1)

At this point though, statistics do not support the realization of an equal educational system. Social constructs preserve existing constructs in the education field.

Researcher: A lot of them have issues with the self-marketing and that inhibits their ability to reach members of the community. Do you feel that’s accurate?

Valeria: I don’t feel that’s accurate for me but I do feel that it can be accurate. One of the interesting things you talk about is how many women there are. Women by rule are not taught to promote themselves, to “lean in” as we like to talk about it in the current vernacular. The other thing you have to realize is that a lot of the people who go into the field...and again I’m generalizing...is that it’s a helping profession and you want to help people and that doesn’t mean putting yourself first. Helping, but staying behind.

Researcher: Serving?

Valeria: Serving, you know? I think that’s a key difference.

This conclusion is noteworthy because it suggests that the passive or servant behaviors of some of the librarians discussed in the context of their roles and the perceptions of their positions are learned. That makes change very difficult and affects the flexibility required to maximize the blended professional role. At the same time, it is possible that awareness of these issues may provide opportunity to manage them so that they do not inhibit professional growth.

7.2.3 Family

Women in the household raising children while the husband works is not a worldwide gender role. “On the whole people who have studied anthropology tend to incline toward the idea that gender is socially created, because every culture discovered across the world has such different norms for ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity.’ Childrearing is *not* a women’s task universally” (Delamont, 1990, p. 8). Yet it does persist in the psyche of women.

For instance, when my wife and I were discussing the prospects of having children, she suggested that she might stay home to raise any kids while I worked. The issue with that scenario is that in her field my wife made substantially more money than me. She still earns more now, even with me holding a doctoral degree, and her

career trajectory is probably on a higher arc than my own. If either of us were to be stay-at-home parents, then economically it would make sense for me to put my career aside. Yet due to conventional beliefs, my wife immediately thought that she should make that sacrifice. The term “sacrifice” also is apt because such familial responsibilities would hamper promotional opportunities in the workplace, and particularly in higher education as the literature reviewed in the chapter “[Historical roles](#)” suggested. Indeed, some of the librarians interviewed here connected their limitations to gender roles in the household.

Bridget directly related the lack of funding for conferences and salary to the fact that administration expected the female librarian to be the secondary breadwinner in the household.

Bridget: Professional development funding is very restrictive and this is a common theme among librarians because they are not the main breadwinners. So my professional travel is funded on the fact that my partner makes a good salary and says, “If you want to do this, don’t worry about it.” Or we go together.

Researcher: So it’s almost like you’re saying...the administrative views it as a gender...

Bridget: No, what I’m saying is that we’re primarily a female-dominated profession...we are able to live a comfortable lifestyle...and define that however you wish...but because our partners can support us. And our partners can support our professional development activities. If I didn’t have [my partner] I would be making a lot of difficult choices. I would not be going to mid-winter and annual. I would have to turn down committee appointments because I could not meet the committee requirements.

Again, money is a concern for the librarians, but the connection between compensation and gender is something wholly different. Here it constructs a professional limitation based upon the expectation that a (presumably male) spouse would support professional academic endeavors. The logic in Bridget’s presumption is not flawless because one wonders then if compensation would rise if the female librarian were single or in a same-sex partnership. The answer is likely no, since complaints about money were uniform in spite of mentioned relationship statuses. At the same time, though, it raises a concern because the perception of the librarian is that she is compensated for what she is, as opposed to what she has done or might do professionally. Bridget, in essence, thinks that she is paid less because she is female with a significant other.

Other librarians specifically cited their familial roles as limitations in the professional aspirations. Catherine mentioned a lack of professional development opportunities at St. Jerome due to a contentious relationship with a male supervisor. She believes that her only hope for advancement will come elsewhere. Accordingly, she has pursued options.

Catherine: For me, my personal life...I don’t want to say kept me here, but has influenced my not going anywhere else. My kids are in absolutely in great schools [here] with opportunities their cousins don’t have, whether they’re in Florida or Ohio or Southern Virginia. They don’t have that. So as a mom and a parent and a spouse as well as other things in my life...you make decisions.

Researcher: Do you think if you went elsewhere your opportunities would be better, equal, or worse?

Catherine: I interviewed about a year ago. I was offered a library director position. It was not a good fit for my family. It was a fabulous opportunity for my career. Yeah. I know I could. I'm quite sure there are a lot of things out there that I can do but I chose to have a husband. I chose to have two kids. And on balance I would say that take more priority than my career. And I had my career for many years before I had them so I knew what I was headed to with what I was investing in my career. For me, I'll get there. But these folks in my life need me to be where I'm at right now, so that's...yes. I know I could.

Despite a belief in her own abilities, Catherine seemingly defaulted to the familial role. Yet another librarian described balancing multiple jobs (and roles) in order to support her family.

I'm trying to figure out...it's entirely possible that this job that I have right here...if I do this and [a second job], I can float financially. Sleep is for the weak. I can manage. I can see my kids just enough to qualify as a parent. I could be at a sweet spot where I'm balancing two roles. I could stay here. Just saying. It's a possibility. I'm not sure. We'll see...maybe sleep is just for the weak.

Parts of that interview were difficult to conduct because I could sense that the librarian was “burning out” from the dual stresses of professional and family life. Overall, there was no indication that the librarians who mentioned family regretted their decisions, but it was clear that limitations arising from family obligations and their personal roles therein made those particular librarians' ability to negotiate professional opportunities much more challenging. With the increasing expectations of the female librarians in the workforce, it remains difficult for women, despite improvements in work-life balance, to have an equal work-life balance (Slaughter, 2012).

7.2.4 Gender summary

The mention of gender with respect to the blended professional is in itself significant. The model is based upon how one views their role as a professional. The construction of this perception is personal and gender—in this case—appears in some ways to influence the academic librarians' perception of their role at St. Jerome.

Again, from my male perspective, the obstacles that gender may present to a blended professional librarian are difficult to assess. It is clear though that perceptions of gender identity present inherent difficulties for the female librarians to overcome. At the same time, changes in attitudes and beliefs of the individual librarians will only address so much of the problem. At St. Jerome, it is systemic.

A librarian mentioned that she spoke with the male library director about her forthcoming marriage. The director asked questions particularly concerned about the financial stability of the groom, which the librarian took mean that the male library director was questioning whether or not she would leave the library job if the librarian's fiancé found other employment. Similar questioning arose when she became pregnant. A colleague echoed similar frustration.

Susanna: I feel it's always easier for promotion for the male librarians than it is for the female librarians. Mainly just because...it seems like to me there's this feeling like “Oh

God, once she gets married just write them off. They're here in body, but...they're going to be gone soon. Let's not bother with the continuing on with their training or anything like that." That's honestly how it always feels. It feels like you get fewer opportunities to do things.

This is the atmosphere—a uniquely gendered third space—in which the librarians are attempting to advance their careers. It is definitely a challenge, since it creates limitations to the effectiveness of the female librarians in the blended professional role because in addition to the already constructed boundaries of influence, gender also generates challenges. Change will come slowly, as evolution requires that society and perceptions change.

7.3 Organization

In terms of organization, the libraries operate in an academic caste system that previously was mentioned. It is what [Bolman and Deal \(2003\)](#) refer to as a “structural frame.” In essence, the organization is configured of “a small number of authority figures at the top and a much larger number of grunts at the bottom” ([Bolman & Deal, 2003](#), p. 41). In smaller settings, there are political interactions with individuals playing people and resources off of each other for personal gain. There is also symbolism with St. Jerome colors around the library and on print and electronic materials circulated within the community.

However, no one is citing the key to their day as demonstrating the St. Jerome spirit and fulfilling the mission of the university. Instead, the librarians tend to perceive the hierarchical levels within the system. With respect to the blended professional model, the regimenting of their organization creates institutionally constructed restrictions that inhibit the librarians' ability to truly blend their role and modify their third space. The genuine limitations of their skills and abilities within the blended professional role, the perceived concerns about time and money, and the additional consideration of gender all are compounded by the structure of the organization and the problems therein.

Even as blended professionals, the librarians are, in effect, boxed in. Faulty communication, lack of professional mobility, overly structured job descriptions, and poor use of talent within the organization all hinder the librarians' professional development. These factors perpetuate the limits on the third space that they might extend by creating impediments to personal growth, outreach, and success.

7.3.1 Communication

Active communication is an important element in the blended professional role because it facilitates contact and collaboration. There was mention of some typical organizational concerns during the interviews, particularly dealing with vertical communication. On a personal level, there was evidence of poor communication with respect to the manager–employee relationship. One manager cited her managerial skill and acumen as her best asset on the job. Yet a librarian on her staff cited that manager as

the key obstacle to her own professional development. Clearly something was amiss in that relationship.

Larger organization-wide communication concerns also emerged in the interviews. [Bolman and Deal \(2003, p. 46\)](#) suggest that the structural organizational approach exists to act as “a blueprint for formal expectations and exchanges among internal players and external constituencies.” When this system fails, obstacles appear. Recall, for instance, the librarians’ uncertainty on the expectations for promotion. In addition, many changes occur in the system without clear written or verbal communication, and this was cited as an obstacle.

Researcher: So you’re kind of being limited by...

Irene: Administrative decisions that we were given no input in!

The most frequently mentioned during these interviews was the forthcoming change to some of the reference duties of the librarians. Basically, in order to encourage outreach, some of their reference desk duties are being eliminated. Given the discussion about introversion and outreach challenges, it is not surprising that this initiative has proved unpopular.

This is not to say that administration does not have the right or ability to make wholesale changes to the roles and duties of the workers. However, in cases of major change, it benefits the organization as a whole to have the ability to offer feedback or be “bought in” by managerial notice. Otherwise, conflict occurs, and the absence of bargaining promotes extended disputes ([Bolman & Deal, 2003](#)).

[Helgesen \(1995\)](#) argued that the hierarchical structure was created by a male-dominated leadership force. In more inclusive systems designed by women, “lines of communication were multiplicitous, open, and diffuse” ([Helgesen, 1995, p. 10](#)), often with a center-out instead of a top-down structure. This feedback is significant because it suggests that the librarians in their roles do not feel that they have open lines of communication with their superiors. Even if the communication is acceptable by traditional organizational standards, the librarians at St. Jerome perceive it to be a concern. Reorganizing communicational structures with this thought in mind might alleviate some of these concerns.

7.3.2 Recognition and advancement

It was previously mentioned that some librarians did not appreciate the push to produce professional academic works when the administration was not publishing in kind. That annoyance is compounded when the recognition offered those librarians who do engage in professional work falls short of their expectations. “One cause of disappointment is [the] failure to recognize that excellence requires much more than sermons from top management” ([Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 400](#)). Congratulations on successful work can be very minimal.

Adele: Maria and I were talking about the poster for ACRL (Association of College & Research Libraries) last year and the director had come in to ask her a question about something else. So Maria was showing him “Oh, Jessica and Adele are doing this poster...blah blah blah.” No “That’s great!” No “Congratulations!” His comment was “Oh, I hear those [posters] are really expensive.”

Researcher: To make?

Adele: To buy. I'm just like "That's your feedback?!" And I just feel like in some ways it's very indicative of the problems here where they don't understand that this helps us...this gets us national attention. I do find that frustrating.

The project is precisely what the administration has been pushing—academic productivity recognized on the national level—yet the major expressed concern was cost to the department. This is not to say that there should be a party or the individual should receive a reward for every significant academic artifact that they produce. However, it is difficult to motivate employees to succeed when there is little to no acknowledgment.

An additional problem was the lack of advancement opportunity within the system. When asked about developing a new library, Susanna said:

I probably would promote myself because...the one thing that I really hate about libraries is that it's really hard to move up. It's almost impossible to find ways to promote yourself up a level. So I would just naturally throw myself up there. And I don't know if I'm ready to be a supervisor, but I'm going to promote myself to a higher level.

Promotion is hard to gain and demonstrates a non-human resources organizational frame (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Successful companies recruit employees with pay and benefits. "To keep them, they protect jobs, promote from within, and give people a piece of the action" (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 137). That does not occur in this organization.

At St. Jerome, three of the four director level positions have been filled by the same (male) person for at least 15 years. The female in the fourth position recently replaced a (male) veteran of 14 years. Yet in order to be considered for management positions, librarians must have supervisory experience. Since most of the librarians do not have professional supervisory experience, the rare promotional opportunities are filled from outside the university.

The librarians understand this is the system in which they work, yet this working environment generates an issue with motivation. What is the incentive to push boundaries if there is not an opportunity for reward or advancement? Why push the third space boundaries for collaboration? This is the mindset that curtails the necessary outreach for a blended professional to be successful in their role.

7.3.3 Differentiation and integration

The academic librarians at St. Jerome are blended professionals. Unfortunately, due to organizational restrictions, many of their colleagues reside in more fixed roles. Bolman and Deal (2003, p. 49) specify two key elements of the organizational structure: "how to allocate work (differentiation) and how to coordinate roles and units once responsibilities have been parceled out (integration)." Feedback from the librarians interviewed suggests that St. Jerome has issues with both of these features. Productivity, morale, and the professional environment are impacted by the structural realities of the organizational system at St. Jerome.

First, differentiation is difficult in St. Jerome's system due to the distinctions between classified staff and the professional or administrative faculty. A general characteristic of these two roles is that classified staff tend not to have the MLS, whereas the faculty academically are trained and credentialed as librarians. There are levels of both forms of employee; the more advanced the rank, the more responsibilities allocated to that particular role. In theory, this should be successful because "clear, well-understood roles and relationships and adequate coordination are key to how well an organization performs" (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 44). At St. Jerome though, the limits on the duties are very strict because the responsibilities correspond to statewide classifications.

Jessica: It gets into class differences more or less and...we actually lost...I don't know if you knew [a former classified staff member], but my understanding from hearsay is that...well we all knew that he did spreadsheets. The man was a wizard at spreadsheets. And he wanted to do more with the data but they would not give him a more professional role so he said, "I'm done. I'm done with stats. Someone else can deal with it" because he felt like he was doing more than what was required by the position and he was not being rewarded for it. And I can understand that.

If a worker exceeds the responsibilities outlined in their respective job description, then the state mandates that they should be compensated for the work. That becomes problematic when economic constraints make raises and reclassification of positions impossible. Work, therefore, at St. Jerome is differentiated between the ranks, but the ability to blend roles within the organizational structure is limited by the constraints of specific rankings.

The functionality of the roles, for the most part, is based upon skills and knowledge (Bolman & Deal, 2003). Each library has separate units, such as reference or circulation, that vary in size based upon the needs of that particular location with other factors, such as shift time or geography, playing lesser roles. This becomes awkward at St. Jerome because the integration of the skills of the classified workers sometimes intersect with those of the librarians.

Jessica: I've been hearing a lot of bits and pieces from conferences and elsewhere where the role of librarians and the role of non-librarians is becoming a lot more fuzzy. I don't think that's necessarily a bad thing but part of me says "I went to library school, darn it!" I wouldn't have gone to library school if I hadn't had to. I only went because that's how you got a job, otherwise I would have never gone to library school. I'm not really sure that I can say that the MLS should be required. I feel like the fact that...I feel that the quote paraprofessional role and the librarian role...I'm not seeing a clear distinction these days.

Think back to the conversation on the quality of library school education. The degree did not so much legitimize the professional as much as it simply opened the door. The skills of the job are pragmatic and experiential, and therefore acquirable by staff performing the same duties as the librarians. "The concept of a non-MLS librarian may appear to demean the profession by suggesting the degree is not essential to being a librarian in the sense that the degree serves as a professional credential indicating mastery of theory and practice of librarianship" (Simpson, 2013, p. 2). The librarians do not appreciate the infringement upon their professional territory,

especially when they are simultaneously vying for credibility and legitimacy around campus themselves.

Part of this hierarchical argument may be seen in the titles assigned to the classified staff in the libraries: paraprofessional. The term itself denotes assistance to the licensed professionals, which in this case are the librarians. Librarians can be keen to point out this difference in ability.

Bridget: And I'm not...this is not an insult to the paraprofessionals at all because I think you know I think you guys are awesome...but I think there's...maybe I'm generalizing and maybe that's too much because I like to think of what I do on the reference desk. The student does not know the question they need to ask. But through my experience and my opportunities, I'm like "Oh, that's where you need to go."

At St. Jerome, paraprofessionals attached to liaison librarian departments were additionally labeled "librarian assistants" or "LAs," further creating a role distinction, which is not necessarily beneficial to the professional environment or productivity.

Lucy: When it becomes a distinction I think it creates an atmosphere that's not good for anyone and I feel that distinction is definitely made more at Alexander VI than it is maybe at the other libraries. And truthfully a lot of our LAs or whatever we call them nowadays have higher degrees or are pursuing higher degrees or have more academic research than the librarians get, so I mean, yeah. I think the reason we're so hung up on the MLS is there has been pockets where that...idea that an MLS is even necessary is being challenged.

In the quotes presented by Bridget and Lucy you see some of the hegemonic wording that I mentioned in the chapter "[Introduction](#)", specifically in this context "paraprofessional" and "LA," or "librarian assistant." This is where my connections to the higher education community at St. Jerome aid in the analysis, as the following perspective was relayed to me by several tenure-track faculty members at the institution during informal conversations.

Whether purposeful or not, this type of terminology structurally confines the classified staff to a rank lower than the librarians. That is fine and natural, since within a structural frame, there are ranks and levels. The problem with this approach, aside from its impact on collaboration and collegiality, is that it simultaneously lowers the standing of the librarians as well, since many of the classified staff have similar functional roles in terms of instruction, reference service, and other duties to those of the academic librarians.

The external academic faculty are very ignorant to the practical and theoretical duties of the academic librarians. In the following chapter, it will be suggested that the library administration might alleviate some of the misconceptions associated with the librarian role by providing better information and high-level outreach to the stakeholders external to the library. In the current state, though, the appearance from the vantage point of the faculty is that the classified staff perform similar duties as the academic librarians. It diminishes the social standing of the academic librarians, since the collective plane of academic capital and contribution is reduced to a position far below that of the tenure-track faculty.

The librarians, of course, also are guarding the legitimacy of their position in opposition to the classified staff for financial reasons. A 2011 study found that 78% of library directors consider budget as a significant reason for hiring non-MLS holding

individuals as librarians (Simpson, 2013). The classified staff makes less money than the faculty-level librarians. If the financial situation dictated change, then what would be the sense of hiring an MLS-holding librarian when a nonlibrarian staff member can do the same or very similar job for 75% of the salary?

At the same, the managers realistically cannot ask classified employees to complete the same duties as a librarian or a higher-ranked classified staff member. This creates a motivational and potentially disciplinary concern as well. The state system makes discipline very complicated though.

Gwen: [In order to fix the system] I might change the fact that we can't terminate people here or then it's such a like arduous process.

Researcher: 18...18 months to terminate anybody who's classified.

Gwen: Yeah. I would maybe change that. My husband always says to me that no actual business could function the way your library functions. There's just no way. Businesses couldn't be profitable if they have people that just kind of showed up and then went home. So I would probably change that and I recognize there's benefits the system that we have now, but that's something that I would change.

The constraints of the role description for classified staff make the integration of motivating tasks for the employees. If the employee balks at change, they will have three 6-month-long disciplinary reviews prior to termination. Systemically, the structure of the organization makes management and mobility very challenging.

The totality of these findings is significant because they demonstrate the difficult structural environment in which the librarians attempt to blend professionally. The librarian role transcends a great deal of organizational boundaries. Unluckily though, the classified personnel who might amplify the success of the academic librarians in their blended role through collaboration and high-levels of cooperation are unable to extend out of a restricted positions.

7.3.4 Use of personnel

In the course of the differentiation and integration of the various roles within the library system, the rigidity of the classifications impedes librarian blended professional development and growth. The issue is recognized by several managers and senior librarians, yet they lack the ability to enact true change. "Experienced managers...understand the difference between possessing a tool and knowing how to use it. Only experience and practice bring the skill and wisdom to size up a situation and use tools well" (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 13). Too often though, screwdrivers are being used to pound in nails.

Jessica: We should be grooming people and that's one of the things that we have not done. Actually that is a barrier since there's a tendency to see people in little pegs. You do this job, you do that job, and you do that job, and there hasn't been as much interest in letting people do things that are a bit broader and fuzzier.

A measure of the matter is that St. Jerome must work in the boundaries defined by the state. At the same time though, the system retards the development of ambitious

classified staff by limiting their practical experience in their current position. It leads to a high amount of turnover among that level of staff.

Gwen: I feel like I'm hiring people that are either out of undergrad or out of library school. They want some experience and I expect them to leave, like they're going to get bored. They want to learn new things and I can only offer so many training opportunities or responsibilities and they're going to get bored and then they're going to move on and I expect that.

Some of the managers actually suggested utilizing staff in more substantial roles for the classified staff. As Catherine proposes, "I see the [LA level III] as almost an administrative librarian in their role. Because you want folks to grow...and we don't have that for those folks in those [classified positions]...so I would change that." This type of change would require a systemic overhaul of the function and ideology of the libraries though, and the economic realities of a publically funded institution create an unlikely scenario in which this change might occur.

This system also potentially impedes the productivity of the librarians themselves. Part of the reasoning behind the paraprofessional label was that the classified staff would be in place to aid the librarians on projects. Librarians state that they do not have enough time to complete substantial research. As well, library school may not have equipped them with the abilities to complete significant quantitative or qualitative methodological studies. As Lucy asserts: "You are the stats guy and there is no way I would deny that. If I were going to have a stats question, I would ask you, because you know stats. It doesn't matter if you have an MLS." At the same time though, not all librarians are willing to ask for help from the lower ranks due to perceived statuses. Therefore, this insight gains importance because it denotes both the librarians' weakening of their blended professional role external to the library by restricting the collaborative opportunities internal to the organization itself.

With such feedback, it is clear that some of the academic librarians are aware that these restrictions might impede cooperative opportunities between classified staff and librarians or lateral projects between multiple librarians with classified staff support. In spite of my classified title of "Reference, Research, and Instruction Specialist," the creation and dissemination of research was never part of my actual role. The official research that I conducted was in support of basic librarian projects. It never really amounted to much more than administrative support, aside from very specific committee work.

During my annual reviews as classified staff, I would always advocate for drafting my position's job description to include the production of academic professionalism so that I could cultivate research collaboratively with the academic librarians. Since publishing or conducting actual methodologically sound research was seen as "above my paygrade" or ancillary to my actual role, I informally was discouraged from developing projects on the job. Personally, I always viewed research and productivity as a means to bolster the image of the department. Instead, the organization viewed such work by the ranks of the classified staff as contributing to the gains of the individual and not the collective whole. There often was classified staff who had the capability and desire to contribute to the academic productivity of the librarians. Unfortunately, the organization cultivated an environment where such collaborations were difficult to undertake.

Finally, the appropriate use of personnel is inhibited by the same siloing mentioned previously that affects internal collaborative opportunities.

Maria: In general, I think we're really bad at recognizing peoples' innate talents and interests and trying to develop those professionally. I've always thought that. You get these people and you see them 3 months out, 6 months out, maybe even a year out and you say "Gosh, well I didn't know they could do that." Well they said they could do that on their resume but I didn't know they *did* this. You know what I mean?

Researcher: Compartmentalization.

Maria: Thank you. And I think for all their talk about de-siloing they reinforce it by not recognizing the innate skills of people and maybe putting people with like skills together in a unit. Not just a temporary taskforce...not just a team...but you structure it.

Librarians perform service work on a variety of committees within the library system at St. Jerome. Temporary fixes have not resolved the organizational issues due to the aforementioned communication concerns and structural restrictions. Again, St. Jerome would require major systemic change in order to find realized success for the librarians as blended professionals.

7.3.5 Organization summary

It seems somewhat ironic that a project detailing how the academic librarians at St. Jerome are blended professionals suggests that the organization within which they work structurally prevents the success of that very model. Yet their professional growth is stymied by the same organizational system that allows for their roles to branch across sectors of the academic community. Vertical communication is poor, and internal opportunity is exceptionally limited. Also interesting is the experience of rank denial that the librarians experience within faculty circles is then passed on to the classified paraprofessionals. Unless regulations on the roles of the classified staff and librarians improve, the organizational culture seems as if it will be a self-perpetuating cycle of semidysfunction.

7.4 Conclusion

Time and money (or compensation) are big complaints of the academic librarians at St. Jerome. However, it appeared that they based their opinions on misconceptions about their tenure-track counterparts. Increased tenure-track-like research responsibilities are encroaching on their schedules. Still, the amount of time spent on their activities does not approach that of the tenure-track.

Money is also a specious complaint. How many people enter the academy due to financial motivations though? The tenure-track faculty might make slightly more on average than the academic librarians, but the differences are not great. Still, the perception that time and money are impediments to the academic librarians' success as blended professionals. Better understanding of the expectations of the librarians through improve communication from the administration might alleviate some of these misconceptions.

Gender is a far more complicated obstacle than either time or money to address, in part because some of the complaints were implied. It is apparent that perceptions of gender identity offer intrinsic challenges for the female librarians to address. At the same time, alterations in outlooks and beliefs of the individual librarians will only speak to so much of the dilemma. At St. Jerome, it is organizational.

Organization brings the final professional obstacle identified by the librarians. The structural frame of the organization inhibits personal and professional growth and enables a caste system to stymie any opportunity. Promotion is not often available, and the use of personnel often results in counterproductivity. While time and money were the most often cited complaints, the true professional obstacles lay in the gender identity of the academic librarians and the structure of the library organization at St. Jerome. With these obstacles identified, the conversation will turn toward the modifications of the blended professional model with respect toward these discoveries and offer suggestions that might mitigate some of the illuminated concerns.

References

- American Faculty Association (AFA). (2012). *Hours for teaching and preparation rule of, thumb: 2–4 hours of pre for 1 hour of class*. American Faculty Association. Retrieved from <http://americanfacultyassociation.blogspot.com/2012/02/hours-for-teaching-and-preparation-rule.html>.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T. D. (2003). *Reframing organizations: Artistry, choice, and, leadership* (3rd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bonfield, B. (2014). *How well are you doing your job? You don't know. No one does*. In, *the library with the leadpipe*. Retrieved from <http://www.inthelibrarywiththeleadpipe.org/2014/how-well-are-you-doing-your-job-you-dont-know-no-one-does/>.
- Boyd, D. (2009). Teaching, nursing, and second wave feminism. *Apophenia*. Retrieved from http://www.zephoros.org/thoughts/archives/2009/10/19/teaching_nursin.html.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2014). *Postsecondary teachers*. Retrieved from <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/education-training-and-library/print/postsecondary-teachers.htm>.
- Delamont, S. (1990). *Sex roles and the school* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.
- Farley, S. D., Timme, D. R., & Hart, J. W. (2010). On coffee talk and break-room chatter: perceptions of women who gossip in the workplace. *Journal of Social Psychology, 150*(4), 361–368.
- Fay, M. J., & Kline, S. L. (2011). The influence of informal communication on organizational identification and commitment in the context of high-intensity telecommuting. *Southern Communication Journal, 77*(1), 61–76.
- Helgesen, S. (1995). *The web of inclusion: A new architecture for building great organizations*. New York: Doubleday.
- Huhman, H. R. (2012). STEM fields and the gender gap: where are the women? *Forbes*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/work-in-progress/2012/06/20/stem-fields-and-the-gender-gap-where-are-the-women/>.
- Jha, J., Page, E., & Raynor, J. (2009). School, gender and stereotypes: despair and hope. In E. Page, & J. Jha (Eds.), *Exploring the bias: Gender and stereotyping in secondary schools* (pp. 1–32). London: Commonwealth Secretariat.
- Johnson, M. (2013). Women and work: current situation. *CQ Researcher, 23*(27), 660–662.

- Madell, R. (2014). *Your looks and your job: Does appearance affect advancement?* Career-intelligence.com. Retrieved from <http://career-intelligence.com/appearance-affect-advancement/>.
- Manley, W. (2002). Telework, or watching television? *American Libraries*, 33(4).
- McAndrew, F. T. (2014). The “sword of a woman”: gossip and female aggression. *Aggression & Violent Behavior*, 19(3), 196–199.
- Miller-Ott, A. E., & Kelly, L. (2013). Mean girls in college: an analysis of how college, women communicatively construct and account for relational aggression. *Women's Studies in Communication*, 36(3), 330–347.
- National Center for Education Statistics. (2011). *Average graduate and first-professional, tuition and required fees in degree-granting institutions, by first-professional field of study and control of institution: 1989–90 through 2010–11*. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d11/tables/dt11_352.asp.
- Neufeld, D. J., & Fang, Y. (2005). Individual, social and situational determinants of telecommuter productivity. *Information & Management*, 44, 1037–1049.
- Neuhauser, A. (2014). Minorities, women still underrepresented in STEM fields study finds. *US News & World Report*. Retrieved from <http://www.usnews.com/news/stem-solutions/articles/2014/02/06/minorities-women-still-underrepresented-in-stem-fields-study-finds>.
- Nicole, P. F., Sheppard, C., Irish, M. S., & Spence, B. (2006). Work appearance isn't skin deep. *Working Mother*, 29, 19.
- Pace, A. K. (2004). Librarians not in libraries. *Computers in Libraries*, 24(9), 32–35.
- Simpson, B. (2013). Hiring non-MLS librarians: trends and training implications. *Library Leadership & Management*, 28(1), 1–15.
- Sinberg, L. (2009). Think looks don't matter? Think again. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/2009/12/05/appearance-work-pay-forbes-woman-leadership-body-weight.html>.
- Slaughter, A. (2012). Why women still can't have it all. *The Atlantic*. Retrieved from <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/>.
- Smith, D., & Van Dyke, T. B. (2008). A telecommuting interlibrary loan librarian's, experience: the views of both the telecommuter and the on-site supervisor. *Journal of Interlibrary Loan, Document Delivery & Electronic Reserves*, 18(4), 449–455.
- van Vugt, M. (2013). Naturally selected: understanding the human animal in the workplace. *Psychology Today*. Retrieved from <http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/naturally-selected/201306/the-sound-leader-ceos-deep-voices-do-better>.
- Wilson, E. (2014). Diversity, culture and the glass ceiling. *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, 21(3), 83–89.