

# NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

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# Libraries 2.3

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What will your library be like in the post COVID environment? Will things return to “normal” or will you use the almost sixteen-month pause to re-invent your library? A lot of people feel that their work is largely meaningless. David Graeber developed the thesis that we are creating more and more meaningless jobs to fill the need for work for those who need to pay off student loans. Some jobs are so worthless that if the employee vanishes, no one notices. One Spanish civil servant moved to another town and took up a different line of work and no one noticed. Some people are employed in jobs that are designed to make other people look good: door keepers for example. Another example are people who use Microsoft Excel and claim to be software engineers. Employees who think their work is useless are anxious and depressed according to Graeber. This is similar to what happened to artisans in the 19th century when they started working in factories rather than individually owned benches at home. This alienation is often connected to how workers are treated by those in charge. If employees feel that they have the opportunity to participate in decision making, are given time to do a good job, and have a real say in how things are done, they are less likely to feel that their work is useless. It’s often said that people don’t leave bad jobs, they leave bad

managers. Recent surveys have revealed that up to forty percent of workers are either dissatisfied with their job or where they live and plan to change as soon as possible.

Will forty percent of your library staff change jobs? Probably not, but COVID has caused many individuals to take a long hard look at what they do and where they live. Some people no longer want to live in urban areas, while others are eager to move to urban centers. Some staff will undoubtedly decide that librarianship is just not for them. Some will take early retirement. Bee keeping and goat herding can seem to be good switch from a job that you don’t like. It’s clear that people are again on the move. This means increasing library recruitment costs and more search committees, but it also provides an opportunity to re-engineer positions in your library for the better. What will you do in the post-COVID Library 2.3 age? Just fill positions as they become vacant, or will you take the opportunity to review what staff do with the goal of making positions more meaningful to employees. Are your staff happy to return from remote work, or will they miss working from home? You can shape their world for the better. Let’s make the COVID pause a time to improve what we do as librarians.

Letters to the editor should be addressed to the editor and mailed to:  
Joyner Library, East Fifth Street, Greenville, NC 27858,  
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# How North Carolina's School and Public Libraries Tackled the Challenge of Providing Excellent Library Service during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is believed to have originated in the fall of 2019 in Wuhan, China, at a so-called "wet market" where domesticated as well as wild and exotic animals were slaughtered for sale. In December 2019, COVID-19 spread like wildfire into neighboring Asian countries, Europe, and eventually the United States and other parts of the globe. The United States was aware of the danger posed as early as January 2020 but there was no official response to the pandemic by the Trump administration, which stifled the public health community from further action. As information about the seriousness of COVID-19 became apparent, information and non-information began to make the national news. The states were left to their own devices without any financial help from the federal government.

It was not until late April 2020 that North Carolina's Governor Roy Cooper issued an executive order closing in-person instruction in public schools for the remainder of the year. This affected also school, public, and academic libraries. The only advice given was to wear masks, wash your hands frequently, and maintain social distancing by maintaining at least six feet of separation.<sup>1</sup>

Teachers were called on instantly to teach remotely, for many a new and challenging experience. Teachers and librarians were required to develop new teaching skills, tools, and strategies to meet needs and support their students

and the general public as they moved through the COVID-19 pandemic. It was plainly obvious that teachers, even the most experienced, needed to be taught how to utilize online resources in order to teach students to find and access learning materials.<sup>2</sup>

Teachers needed in-depth instruction on how to evaluate the contents and validity of certain digital tools and websites and to promote digital reading. Teachers who receive the proper training will be able to introduce students to an expansive online library of information and reading for students, including new books, special collections, audiobooks, books in other languages, eBooks, audiobooks, large print, braille, and other reference materials.

Public libraries, in most cases, found their doors closed to the public as COVID-19 interrupted their services too. In many cases, due to lack of funding, this resulted in the loss of jobs for those working in public libraries. Public librarians were challenged to find new ways to serve the community.

Cooperation between school media coordinators and public librarians was needed to share limited resources. The advent of the pandemic was an opportunity to reevaluate their roles and find new ways to present a unified front to important stakeholders, including teachers, students, parents, and the community at large.

With the advent of COVID-19 the concept of providing excellent library service took precedence. The new

concept of online learning required tech-savvy school media coordinators and public librarians to teach students remotely through Google Classroom, while simultaneously utilizing technology tools to keep students excited and engaged, to support faculty with virtual resources to supplement the curriculum, and to garner the support of parents, now expected to be home-schooling experts.

A sampling of school and public library programs throughout North Carolina demonstrates the creativity and resourcefulness of libraries. With the leadership and funding provided by the State Library of North Carolina, all public and school libraries in North Carolina have been provided a toolbox of skills and resources to help students and the public at large to navigate the unfamiliar waters of remote learning as well as to foster the joy of reading to all students learning in their new virtual classrooms. Cooperation between and among public and private school systems and public libraries is essential.

## Beaufort County Schools & Beaufort-Hyde-Martin Regional Library

The Beaufort-Hyde-Martin Regional Library (BHM) and the Beaufort County Schools play a critical role in providing digital materials for library users in the eight libraries located in Beaufort, Hyde, and Martin Counties in Eastern North Carolina.

1 N.C. Dept. of Health & Human Services, COVID-19 Response. (2021, January 7). *COVID-19 North Carolina Dashboard*. Retrieved from <https://covid19.ncdhhs.gov/dashboard>

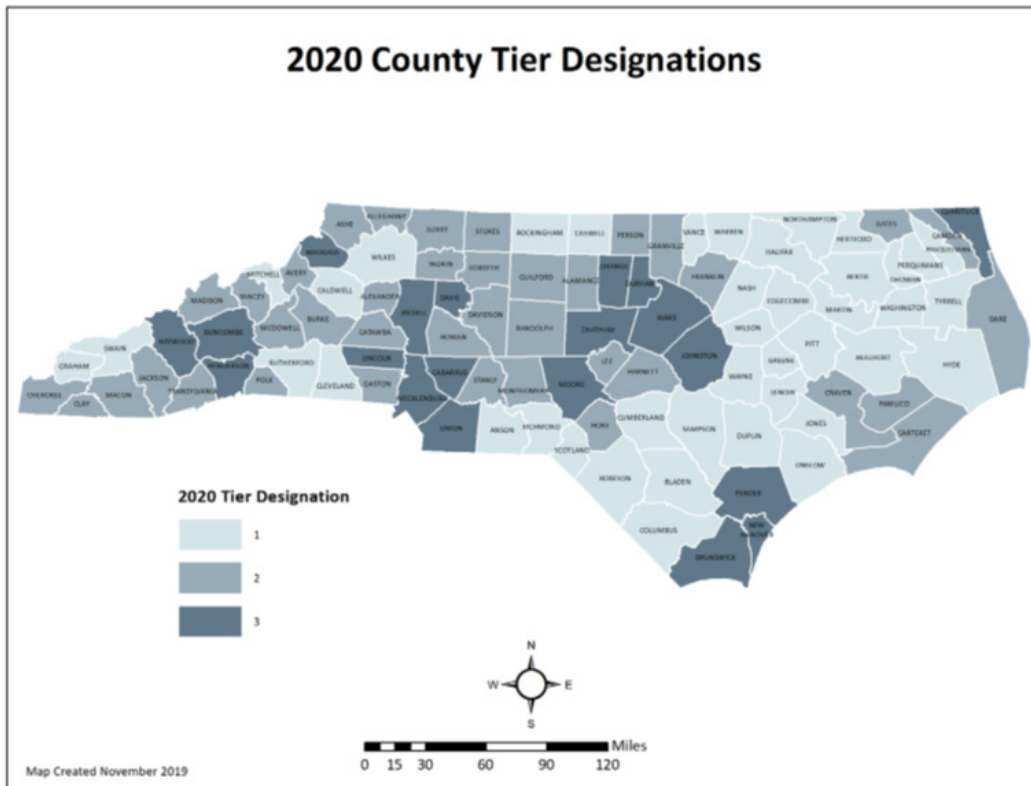
2 R. Halverson, C. Kelley, & J. Shaw, J. (2014). A Call for Improved School Leadership. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 95(6), 57-60.

These counties are ranked in the lowest tier of county-distress rankings (see Figure 1) by the North Carolina Department of Commerce, with the exception of Beaufort County, that moved to a less distressed tier ranking in the 2021 scale.<sup>3</sup> These counties are affected more adversely than other more prosperous counties by the COVID-19 pandemic, causing greater hardships, especially for children. This rural, more socioeconomically distressed area can gain resources, support, and expand collections, supporting those children without additional finances when schools make use of public libraries.

With the leadership and funding of the State Library of North Carolina, one innovative new tool available to a statewide eBook consortium of all public, school, and regional libraries throughout North Carolina is the NC Kids' Digital Library. Targeting pre-K through 4th grade students, NC Kids' Digital Library is an online collection of eBooks, audiobooks, and videos that can be checked out using the OverDrive reading platform.<sup>4</sup>

In Beaufort County, for example, a public school student can tap into this digital library simply by choosing the BHM Regional Library as their library of choice from a drop-down menu and

then entering their student IDs as their card numbers. According to school media coordinator Emily Davis of John Small Elementary School in Washington, Beaufort County, North Carolina, the NC Kids' Digital Library collection has been an obvious hit with the students, especially since March 2020 and the inception of the remote learning experience. One parent reported that her fifth-grade son "is a real reader. He really liked all the selections and that if a book was checked out, he could enter a request and the book would be his upon return. It gave constant selection availability."<sup>5</sup> This highly satisfied parent had not taken advantage of the



**Figure 1: Distressed County Rankings - The 40 most distressed counties are designated as Tier 1, the next 40 as Tier 2 and the 20 least distressed as Tier 3. Source: N.C. Dept. of Commerce.**

3 Kaye B. Dotson, Mary E. Yontz and Plummer Alston Jones, Jr. (2018). Public Libraries and School Libraries: Partnerships to Support Truth in History. *North Carolina Libraries*, 76(2018): 2

4 State Library of North Carolina, N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. (2020). *North Carolina Public Library Directory 2020; NCKidsDigitalLibrary* (<https://nckids.overdrive.com/>)

5 *North Carolina Department of Commerce*. (2020, December 28). Retrieved from <https://www.nccommerce.com/news/press-releases/commerce-issues-2021-economic-development-tier-rankings>; N.C. Dept. of Commerce. (2021, January 11). *N. C. Commerce Issue 2021: Economic Development Tier Rankings: 22 Counties Will Change Tiers Next Year*. Retrieved from <https://nccommerce.com/grants-incentives/county-distress-rankings-tiers>

public library prior to COVID-19 restrictions, but will continue to build this relationship, based on what she has seen her child achieve.

Checking out books to read is a valuable part of the school library experience. Parents appreciate the ready supply of reading materials available through the public library over the often-barren summer months. Another parent reported about her son's experience. "Since he has been using the online public library, I have not seen a huge gap in his reading comprehension. We all know about the summer gap, but this year has certainly been extremely different. He has enjoyed being able to continue to check out books on his reading and interest level.

*“An immediate favorite of the remote students in Beaufort County is the digital library's highlighted collection of materials that appears front and center...”*

He has started reading a new series and looks forward to finishing one book so he can check out the next. He also has been excited to know that since he can check out a book virtually that he doesn't have to wait for someone to return it to the library before he can read it! I hope that many other students across our county are taking advantage of this awesome resource!"<sup>6</sup>

Comments like these from engaged parents let librarians, both school and public, know that both parents and students have "discovered" the new virtual public library. This expanded call for materials from the public library will have a positive impact as users continue to take advantage of the public library that has been there all along.

An immediate favorite of the remote students in Beaufort County is the digital library's highlighted collection of materials that appears front and center upon signing in to the BHM Regional Library. This collection reflects a variety of seasonal books relevant to any specific occasion, including Constitution Day, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Halloween. Conveniently there is a collection of books for students participating in Battle of the Books, a perennial favorite competition.

When students are ready to check out a book, they simply click on the book and choose the borrow option where they can also dictate the time period to have the book checked out.

A total of five books may be checked out per student with an option to keep the books for up to three weeks. Once the time has expired, a book is automatically returned to the digital collection, another feature the students really appreciate. The whole experience of using the BHM digital library method is user-friendly, allowing students to navigate the library collection completely on their own, a feature appreciated by librarians, teachers, and parents.

Teachers are enjoying the NC Kids' Digital Library as much as their students. Teachers can assign reading materials and keep up with student comprehension through Reading Counts, an independent reading program used to monitor student reading and

progress. In addition, students are encouraged to check out books related to the subjects being taught in their virtual classrooms. Over the months since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, for example, students have frequently searched for reading materials based on North Carolina lighthouses, the Wright brothers, Blackbeard, and amphibians. The digital library has been an incredible resource for supplementing reading materials to students while learning from their virtual classrooms at home.<sup>7</sup>

The partnerships between the State Library of North Carolina, the BHM Regional Library, and Beaufort County Schools have been invaluable in not only providing an alternative to searching for and checking out books in person, but in presenting a fun online experience for today's remote learners. Its availability and accessibility to all students in the Beaufort County Schools has made a difference in establishing a smooth changeover to full remote learning. Another enthusiastic parent explained, "once my son learned how to navigate the online library on his own, he has been completely interested in books he would never think of reading before. He enjoys the self-paced aspect of the online library and the feeling of being able to take his time to find quality and age-appropriate reading materials."<sup>8</sup>

These partnerships have enabled both teachers and students to access a wide array of library materials. Teachers and school and public library administrators now agree that instructional presentation and student engagement are more important than ever before, and the support the public library is affording them is invaluable. As students transition to a hybrid model or full face-to-face instruction

6 BHM Regional Library, *Servicing Beaufort, Hyde, and Martin Counties*. (2021, January 7). Retrieved from <https://bhmlib.org/>;

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

in the future, the NC Kids Digital Library will be there every step of the way ensuring student success.

## Wake County Schools

Although there is a clear need in these distressed counties it is important to note that less distressed counties may also find great benefit in the developing partnerships that have emerged since COVID-19. Many of the services, that in some cases were already in place, are now finding a broader reception during this time of restricted activity. Just a few of these other avenues throughout the state that support students in accessing library materials for children include the Book Club Kits provided through Wake County Schools. These kits include the following:

- 15 copies of a book title, a sturdy bag, and a book discussion guide
- 30 titles from which to choose (with five kits available for each title and titles that target kindergarteners through 5th graders and up)
- The online software, KitKeeper, allows members to request kits up to a year in advance, as well as place multiple requests and kits may be checked out for six weeks
- The Book Club Kits for Kids booklet includes a short synopsis and book review of each title
- Members may suggest titles to be considered for addition to the service<sup>9</sup>

## Greensboro Public Library

The Greensboro Public Library offers curbside pickup for holds. Customers could place up to ten items on hold and pick them up at their neighborhood branches. Library Director Brigitte Blanton shared that much of what customers appreciate about libraries can now be found on the website.

One public librarian was invited to record Google Handouts for students on how to access online resources and to record several short videos to show students how to get an online library card, how to search for available titles in Overdrive, and how to take advantage of other online resources. School librarians encourage their students to access these videos.<sup>10</sup>

## Gaston County Schools, Gaston Day School, and Gaston County Public Library

The partnership in place between Gaston County Schools, Gaston Day School, and the Gaston County Public Library, allowed for the implementation of the WOW (Without Walls) Card. This virtual library card gives public and private school students access to online resources via the Gaston County Public Library. Partnerships among private and public schools and the public library have proved beneficial to teachers, students, parents, and the community at large.<sup>11</sup>

## Carteret County Public Library

Lesley Mason, Carteret County Library Director shared a new development that helps broaden access to library materials online. Students are permitted to use their student ID numbers as their library cards. According to the new partnership between the Carteret County Schools and the Carteret County Public Library a wealth of public library literature is available at students' fingertips. Mason maintained that "in addition to what they have in the school system, they can now have access to all of the resources of the public library."<sup>12</sup>

Carteret County has done away with overdue fines, and has implemented a courtesy checkout, a feature that renews items automatically. These efforts help both students and parents, making it possible for everyone to have access with as little stress as possible.<sup>13</sup>

## Conclusion

School and public library leaders have worked hard and creatively to make virtual learning beneficial. Providing broad access to library materials will help students, teachers, and parents with virtual learning during the pandemic and beyond. Although the now approved Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson vaccines are readily available, the vaccination rate is way behind what was anticipated.

Although schools in some areas are preparing for full opening, the future

9 Wake County Public Library. (2020, October 11). *Book Club Kits for Kids*. Retrieved from

<http://www.wakegov.com/libraries/kitsforkids/Pages/default.aspx>

10 Greensboro Public Library. (2020, September 30). *COVID-19 (Coronavirus) Updates*. Retrieved from <https://library.greensboro-nc.gov/about-us/covid-19-updates>; ALSC (Association for Library Service to Children) Blog. (2020, April 4). *Building Public and School Library Partnerships during COVID-19*, Retrieved from <https://www.alsc.org/blog/author/alsc-building-partnerships/>

11 Gaston County Public Library. (2020, October 13). *About the WOW (WithOutWalls) Card*. Retrieved from <http://gastonlibrary.org/wow/about-the-wow-card/>

12 WITN.com. (2020, October 23). *Carteret County Schools and County Library Partner for Student Virtual Resources*. Retrieved from <https://www.witn.com/2020/10/24/carteret-county-schools-and-county-library-partner-for-student-virtual-resources/>

13 Ibid.

is far from certain. Regardless of what has transpired with remote learning efforts, much has been learned through the provision of virtual library materials and learning experiences, even in this unprecedented time of global pandemic. There can be no doubt that this pandemic has brought an increase in the use of electronic and digital resources and increased reliance on cooperation among libraries of all types.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made it imperative that school and public libraries provide more widespread use of online resources and e-learning experiences, and as a direct result there has been increased virtual checkouts in most countries. The increased awareness among students of

the tools available to them online is a very positive outcome. Increased awareness of the availability and accessibility of virtual library materials has had a positive impact on demonstrating to the general public that school and public libraries continue to provide educational support, promote reading for pleasure, and make the community at large aware of the benefits libraries offer.

If school and public librarians continue cooperating, collaborating, and supporting each other, while promoting the diversity of resources provided by each, there will be renewed confidence in the ability of school and public libraries to make lives better in this time of global pandemic. The shift

to virtual librarianship will continue to provide more access to more people.

As we look ahead to the future of library service, librarians must continue to develop partnerships between public and school communities to serve students and educators across the state. State and federal funds are essential to providing excellent library services to the citizens of North Carolina, especially as libraries continue to tackle the challenge of providing excellent library service during the lingering COVID-19 pandemic, especially with the emergence of the even more transmissible Delta variant, until herd immunity can be achieved through vaccinations.

## Submission Requirements for North Carolina Libraries

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- » To submit you must login; if needed you can register using the link in the header.
- » We use the *Chicago Manual of Style* (16th edition, 2010).
- » We have a rolling deadline; articles are juried when received.
- » Publication of approved articles is in about 3-9 months depending on space available.
- » For additional information, contact Ralph Scott at: [scottr@ecu.edu](mailto:scottr@ecu.edu)

## Partnering Public and School Librarians for School Readiness Programming

Aside from storytimes in the library's space, it can be tricky to bring the community to the library to gain early childhood literacy. As a public librarian, it is imperative to find the resources out in the community that helps every type of family with providing school readiness services to their child. Families have different needs that cannot be encompassed in a weekly storytime program. School librarians are finding that students are entering school with a lack of preparation for being in school. Networking with a school librarian, who is more familiar with school standards and curriculum to prepare children for Kindergarten, can prove to be a fantastic collaboration in creating a program to combat this dilemma.

School Readiness Fairs are similar to career fairs, except the focus is on bringing early childhood organizations from the community to speak on the resources and services that they have to offer their children. Local daycares, schools, partnerships for children, and the library in general have a lot of services that the community's caregivers are not aware of. According to Baker (2015) "A large one-time event allows you to connect adults with other early childhood services in your community, and it provides the opportunity to promote your lengthier programs to the adults who attend" (p. 103). Having a school readiness fair can help bridge the gap of knowledge and bring equity to allow every type of family to be at the same starting place. From financial issues, mental or physical disabilities, to lack of knowledge in the community, caregivers have different needs that organizations can meet to

create a more equitable start of school. There are many reasons these children do not attend formal preschool, including lack of transportation, socio-economic status, or lack of opportunities nearby, but it is important to remember that the library can assist in this endeavor by bringing the resources to one location, the school readiness fair. The focus of this school readiness fair is for caregivers that have children who are about to start Kindergarten within a year. By bringing in families that have 4-year-olds, it helps caregivers use the techniques and resources before their child enters Kindergarten.

As the public librarian, doing early childhood programs is a normal aspect of library work. Storytimes are a quintessential part of the library that can oftentimes be overlooked. Public librarians help prepare children for basic school readiness but may not know what children are required to know when entering Kindergarten, curriculum standards, or the services offered by schools nearby. Having an ally who is in the school system when doing school readiness programs helps flesh out the programs to be filled with substantial knowledge instead of just fluff. An ally who is familiar with library work and knows the goals of the library is ideal, making that perfect ally the school librarian.

### Networking with School Librarians

Making connections in other disciplines of librarianship, school to public and vice-versa, can seem intimidating, but after making the relationship, it will prove to be most beneficial. Oftentimes librarians are scared to

network outside of their discipline due to a lack of understanding on what the other person does on their end. Creating these opportunities to connect creates a better understanding and appreciation of what each discipline is doing for the community's children.

Networking locally can be a struggle with various schedules. School librarians have tight schedules due to the constraints of classes, circulation time slots, and collaborations with teachers. Finding time to collaborate during the school year is tough to do, but making those connections early allows for better time management in both schedules. Networking across the state or nation can be a bit trickier but can prove to be quite beneficial for idea building. Attending library conferences with the intent on networking is a great way to meet those who could help be great assets in partnering with ideas. Through conferences, social media groups, or emailing, networking nationally is an easier way to connect without the issue of scheduling in person.

Once a partnership is created between the school librarian and the public librarian it is best to establish the goals of the program. The overall goal is to provide school readiness information and resources to caregivers and their children. To determine how to divvy the work up is to determine what the strengths are of the public and school librarians. Public librarians experience working with children and their caregivers together, while the school librarians usually work with solely the children. This can help allow for the public librarian to know what the community's needs are from the



librarians, and the school librarian can help with designing the content for what the children need to know. Splitting up the tasks like this requires trust, but when trust is there, it will make the planning easier to handle. Next, determine what connections and networking have already been established outside of the library through community members. These are the speakers or vendors at the community fair who will be talking to the caregivers. Having local community members helps boost their programs as well as brings more people into the library. The partnership helps out everyone involved with outreach and marketing. Bringing more community members into the fair, helps bring out more information to the caregivers.

### **Networking Outside of the Library**

After finding a school librarian to partner in the program, it is best to find other leaders in early childhood literacy within the community. Many communities have a plethora of resources to offer families, but oftentimes the options begin to muddle together. That is how the school readiness fair can help provide all of the options in the same place for the caregivers to learn about. The public and school librarian should research and determine which organizations should be included into the fair to best offer their resources. Cold calls to organizations may seem intimidating, but oftentimes organizations who share the same goal will find a way to participate. Understand that various schedules could conflict with the program. See if there are other members who are willing to represent the organization on their behalf. It is important to have various organizations represented to provide the most diverse information to caregivers of all backgrounds and needs. Some caregivers may want to place

their child in private schools, so a private school representative is helpful to have. Caregivers may need information on reduced lunch and how to find free school supplies, so having those options available for every type of family brings out more people.

School librarians work with many early childhood leaders within the school, such as Kindergarten teachers, principals, school counselors, and social workers. The school librarian can be a great mutual partner in helping obtain the teacher, since they have the most experience working with them. Kindergarten teachers are the ones who know what children need to know before entering school, so they are truly great mentors to the program and what it needs to entail. Caregivers will value meeting kindergarten teachers to help visualize their child's preparation for entering school. Administrative representatives and social workers provide ease of access for caregivers to ask for sources of financial assistance with lunch or school supplies. Having a school partner in the program will allow the caregivers attending the programs to be more acclimated to the local elementary school, allowing them to feel at ease to build up rapport with the administration and staff members.

The partnership for children is a great organization to make connections with due to their exclusive expertise in the birth to kindergarten age range. The partnership has all of the appropriate resources to give to caregivers of all socio-economic backgrounds. Many offer free Pre-K to families that qualify. Children can receive a head start on preparing for school readiness through this program that many families do not know they qualify for. Having these partnerships with these various community leaders helps provide the information and resources to the caregivers empowering them and their children.

After building up the relationships, creating a partnership in programming will be easier to do versus rightly asking someone to do a collaboration in programming. Knowing that the other librarian has the same goals and abilities is helpful in creating a consistent program. At the end of the day, the goal is to bring in diverse families to prepare for early literacy and school readiness. Having this goal on the forefront makes it easier to network with others.

### **Developing the Storytime Program**

When developing the program for families, it is best to decide the layout of the fair. The vendors will need space in order to set up their booths to meet with caregivers. If space is available, there could be scheduled storytimes to do with caregivers and their children to help show caregivers examples of what they could be doing at home. While it is helpful for the librarian to do these activities with the children in the library, the caregiver is the child's first teacher. Knowing this relationship and empowering caregivers with this role is key in creating a successful readiness program. Teaching caregivers tips and techniques to do at home will help build a routine. Having a song to start off with, a book to read, and a song to finish off with, can allow for a quicker sample storytime program for caregivers to return back to the booth area. Reiterate to caregivers that storytime happens frequently, often encompassing many different subjects and areas for growth. Having this sample storytime will help caregivers see library programs in a newer light.

Structuring the storytime using practices from Every Child Ready to Read can help establish to caregivers the standard of what storytimes should look like. Many libraries across the nation use Every Child Ready to Read

practices to structure their storytimes due to its proven level of success. These can be done by the five practices of early literacy: play, read, sing, talk, and write. According to their website, Every Child Ready to Read (n.d.) is a program created by the Public Library Association and the Association of Library Services to Children in 2004, to help enhance library storytime and school readiness programs. Incorporating these within the programming will help prepare children for early literacy and school. Due to Every Child Ready to Read being mainstream across children's libraries across the country it should be easier to incorporate it into the school readiness program to educate its effectiveness to caregivers.

## **Developing the School Readiness Fair**

School Readiness Fairs bring the community together by having the leaders of early childhood literacy together providing caregivers the best resources that the community has to offer. Having representatives present helps put a face to a name, allowing connections to be made. Representatives are performing outreach to push out the resources that they have, while caregivers are given everything that they need and more.

After arranging the storytime space for caregivers to sample activities to do with their children at home and at the library, next would be the booths from the organizations. Having space in between each of the booths will allow for caregivers to move freely through each one and have room to have conversations about their child's needs. Encourage the organizations to bring their outreach materials (brochures, tablecloths, posters, etc.) to allow caregivers to know who and what each booth is before they talk to the representative. Having different organizations grouped together based on

services provided will also help show the options available to the caregivers. Having public and private schools' booths nearby each other will help caregivers remember those interactions easier. Lastly, it is important to remember to trust the organization's booth representatives to advocate their programs to the caregivers. Not everything in the program can and should be planned. Caregivers will gain a lot from the program, so much that it may be overwhelming to them at first, but in the end, they will be grateful for the knowledge.

## **Booth Ideas from the Library**

Other great booth ideas are ones that support the library's resources and services. Many tables could be set up to promote what the library has to offer. If possible, the best way to advocate for the library's early education programming could be done on a microphone to introduce and begin the school readiness fair. Introducing the public and school librarians as the collaborating hosts for the school readiness fair, explaining what organizations are there, and advocating for the school readiness programs that the library has to offer, is a great way to kick off the event. While all of the organizations are there to showcase their resources, it is the library's program in their space. As the public and school librarian hosting the program, there may be other things that need tending to during the program that could take away from recommending library resources. So, recommending and advocating for library services during the introduction can help alleviate the public and school librarians to handle other things.

The library's story times are one of the biggest early literacy programs that should be mentioned during the introduction. Explaining and advocating for storytimes helps caregivers see the

merit of storytimes, instead of it being "play time" for their children. According to Baker (2015), "One of the main reasons for this lack of universal awareness is the public library's oversight to intentionally advocate for their own programs as school readiness resources" (p. 7). Explaining to caregivers that storytimes tend to have a structure following Every Child Ready to Read helps promote the merit behind these programs. Reading the book and singing songs during storytime accomplishes the reading and singing practices. If the activity at the end includes use of a writing utensil (crayons, markers, paint brush) it can be writing. At the beginning of the program introducing one another and talking during the activity can fulfill the talking practice. Finally, if the activity is instead using sensory toys or games to socialize, it can fulfill the play practice. These all contribute to building early literacy that caregivers should know about. Advocating this during the introduction to everyone helps them understand the work and effort put together to bring about early literacy.

Outside of the introduction, table booths could be there to advocate for other services. Programs for children are important, but while the caregivers are there mention some other services offered that could benefit the whole family. Older children's programs, teen programs, adult programs, audiobooks, e-book applications, and the computer lab are all services that caregivers forget about. Reminding them of the services available will help them see the other opportunities available at the library to help them grow. Having a booth on helping caregivers set up their e-book application on their phone can be a great start to quickly bring new readers to use it, who may not have done so before. Another booth advocating for the programs that the library has to offer, outside of early literacy,

can show that caregivers other children or family members could gain from coming to the library's events. Even though it is a school readiness fair for early childhood, that does not mean that the caregivers cannot receive valuable information for their other older children.

### More than "Just for Kids"

Oftentimes the problems in school readiness programs lie in the misconception that the storytimes are just for the kids' benefit. Storytimes and school readiness programs can and should be just as much for the caregivers as it is for the children. As stated earlier, the caregiver is the first teacher that the child has in their life. According to Baker (2015) "Children begin learning from their parents as soon as they are born, even if parents are not aware that it is happening. School readiness programs at the library should model practices in a way that honors the parents as their child's best teacher while also helping the parent to build their literacy practices" (p. 19). Empowering the caregiver is the main goal of the school readiness program. Providing these resources and tips are not benefiting the child so much, but the caregiver. Doing the activities and reading the stories are engaging and fun for the child, but these are things that caregivers should learn how to do at home to keep educating their child outside of the library. By empowering the caregiver, it helps give them the confidence they need to further prepare their child for school. Modeling the behaviors and techniques learned in the library's program can go a lot further if done routinely in the child's life.

The goal of the event is to help promote to caregivers the resources they need to help promote early literacy at home. According to Trelease (2019) "The one prekindergarten skill

that matters above all others, because it is the prime predictor of school success or failure, is the child's vocabulary upon entering school. Yes, the child goes to school to learn new words, but the words he already knows determine how much of what the teacher says will be understood" (p. 10). Bringing their child to storytimes and other programming helps, but caregivers need to be empowered to know that they can do storytime at home. Storytimes help add in new vocabulary words that build up over time, helping the child understand more and more of the world around them. Caregivers are the ones who promote this within the home. Caregivers can help children practice writing. Caregivers can use the information learned at the event to allow their child a head start into their education. At the end of the program, librarians, school or public, are there to help caregivers take charge of their child's education.

### Conclusion

Collaboration with the school librarian to create school readiness programs can be a fulfilling relationship that could turn into an annual program. Other ideas or collaborations can come from the partnership, making it important to make connections with the schools nearby. Constant advocating for public and school library programs can bring about a community awareness for how important the library is. According to Baker (2015) "Do not keep your successes to yourself when your program might make an impact on other communities" (p. 98). Baker is saying that libraries should spread the word to other librarians in other communities to lead the way for school readiness programs and what works. Bringing awareness to school readiness programs brings more families to the next storytime or event allowing for

more patron usage all around. Overall, networking and collaborating outside of the public library can provide a lot of opportunities for learning about the community around the library, so that way as a librarian more knowledge can be returned to the patrons that walk into the library every day.

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# Professional Development During a Pandemic: Transforming a Conference for Library Paraprofessionals

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The annual, one-day Paraprofessional Conference is hosted, planned, and coordinated by East Carolina University's Joyner Library. Since 2004, the conference has provided professional development opportunities geared to library staff from academic, school, and public libraries across North Carolina. Its unique focus on paraprofessionals has made the conference a consistent success over its 15 years in existence. In 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic complicated planning and logistics for the conference originally scheduled for early May. Working as the Paraprofessional Committee, our team successfully executed a shift from the traditional face-to-face conference styling to that of an entirely virtually held conference, thus reimagine a face-to-face conference as a completely virtual synchronous experience. Through our process, practical lessons learned, successes, and shortcomings we look to support others who are interested in creating meaningful and engaging virtual conferences, whether by choice or necessity through this 2020 experience.

Conference attendees represent the broader community of paraprofessionals across North Carolina, from public, academic, and school libraries, institutions, and other areas of academia. This conference is often one of the few options available to paraprofessionals because of the topics offered and the low cost of attendance, with prices typically between \$15 and \$25. Each year, the planning committee selects a theme around which session proposals and keynote speakers are focused. We have a predetermined theme, rotating

between Technology and cyber awareness, Inclusion and diversity, Motivation, energy and teamwork, Engagement and customer service, or TIME. Participants report choosing to attend annually to experience each year's topic as well as the in-depth networking opportunities for attendees from across the state.

The planning committee that coordinates the logistics and content of the entire conference is made up of seven Joyner Library paraprofessional staff. Of the seven two act as co-chairs that share the duties of overseeing the progress of the conference planning while playing active roles in acquiring a keynote speaker, recruiting sponsorships and presenters, managing the conference budget and more. The other committee members perform duties that include contacting potential presenters, coordinating technology and space needs, organizing conference volunteers, and other important tasks. The group consists of veteran paraprofessional conference planners and newer members who are eager to offer new insights, ideas, and assistance.

After a successful 15th annual conference in 2019 and heading into its 16th year in 2020, the Paraprofessional Conference was on track to continue its mission of providing professional development opportunities to the library paraprofessionals across North Carolina. With an increase in attendance of more than 20% from 2018 to 2019, the planning committee's goal for the 2020 conference was to keep momentum up and continue to improve attendees' experience. The date for the in-person event was set for May 15, 2020.

Throughout the fall of 2019 and into early 2020, the planning committee had been productive through weekly meetings, creating documentation, and adhering to a strict timeline. The keynote speaker was secured, the website up to date, and marketing efforts were underway. The committee had also developed a new process to match presenters to rooms based on technology demands. The only remaining task was to order food for the event once registration was set.

Of course, throughout these planning efforts, the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19 continued to be reported in the news. By March 2020, the planning committee began discussing the possibility the pandemic would affect the upcoming conference. The greatest concern was how to minimize health and safety risks for attendees and presenters. Additionally, the procedures for providing refunds to attendees and the possibility of losing non-refundable deposits needed to be addressed if we needed to cancel as the originally scheduled opening date of early registration fast approaching. On March 12, the university indefinitely suspended in-person classes and events until further notice. Fortunately, only two people had registered for the event by that point and no payments had been made for any catering services.

In under two weeks, the tone of planning meetings went from "if the conference happens" to "if and when the conference happens," to "when the conference happens." The committee co-chairs were in constant communication with administration and the planning committee members as ECU closed its campus. The location of the

conference in the main library building was in doubt. The timeframe of early May was also heavily debated. Should we postpone? Should we cancel? How can we have a conference amid a pandemic, especially as conferences across the state started sending refunds and warning of cancellations?

We opted to go online and push the date of the conference back to June 17th and 18th. Other conferences began to announce similar decisions around the same time which helped the push to try going virtual. However, this change required direct communication with our stakeholders. This included coordinating with presenters who may not have had the availability due to changes in their own workflow or our rescheduling. It also meant a change of a keynote speaker which sets the tone for the entirety of the conference. Another hurdle would be picking the right technology that would be easy enough to use. Additionally, a traditionally in-person affair being moved online caused some fears of attendees' experience and if people would even come. And most importantly, could we still get barbeque?

### **Communication is the Driver**

To make sure our conference goals would still be realized, the first step in our adjusted formatting was to communicate with registered attendees and presenters. Within days of the university's decision to suspend events, we offered refunds to registrants and told presenters that there would be a delay and more information would be forthcoming. We also contacted previous attendees and shared that we would be delaying and awaiting more guidance as the pandemic was still developing. By starting our communication early, and being clear in our intent to have our presenters present virtually, we were able to maintain our original schedule and give adequate time for

our participants to adjust their presentation style, fitting the new virtual theme.

As time passed into April and May, it was increasingly apparent that our conference would not be held in person anytime soon. Delaying the conference date further and planning for an in-person event could impact the 2021

*“ Our communication methods helped us to determine which path was most efficient and was ultimately the foundation of our success. ”*

conference, as having two conferences within months of one another would be a logistical nightmare or push the conference and to have it coincide with the start of the fall semester, which can be a remarkably busy time for any academic library! Neither option was ideal.

In our continued updates to presenters, we asked if they may be more comfortable delaying the conference, cancelling entirely, or presenting online. We found the majority understood the need for a delay, but only around 50% were comfortable with presenting online. Some were unsure of their work schedule due to the pandemic while others just felt their presentation was better suited for an in-person event. As a result, some presenters no longer wished to participate. This included the keynote speaker. With the survey suggesting we would have enough continuing presenters for at least 10 sessions, we felt confident we could go online if university restrictions prohibited us from offering an in-person event. We had presenters, potentially, but no keynote.

Once the university cancelled in-person classes and events, the meetings of the planning committee also became all virtual. This was a major change for us as a group. In previous years, we communicated consistently via email, informal hallway conversations, and face-to-face meetings, formats that allow for a lot of information to be shared quickly and minor issues to be resolved. By shifting to more structured virtual meetings, we worried that some issues would fall through the cracks. Luckily, this was not the case as we quickly replaced those informal meetings phone calls or quick chats in WebEx.

Our communication methods helped us to determine which path was most efficient and was ultimately the foundation of our success. We were able to support our decision to hold a virtual conference by holding many frank conversations and communicating openly amongst the committee and with presenters. Through that communication, we realized we could do not only hold the conference, but also do so successfully.

The planning committee shifted our attention to the possibility of going fully online through the WebEx platform. This shift was an approach that other conferences began to announce around the same time, which helped our own push to move to a virtual event. Deciding on June 17th and 18th, the committee locked down the date of the conference but only after much debate on whether we should cut some presentations to fit it into one or offer multiple sessions for some parts of the day. Two days of the conference would be given to each presenter, allowing for a large enough platform of communication to the audience as well as allowing for flexibility with individual and day-of scheduling.

## **The Importance of Keeping a List**

While we were short a keynote, we learned from previous years that things can happen and we needed to prepare backup presenters - possibly even backups for backups. A major part of the search for a keynote speaker each year is encompassed with the attempts of matching our conference theme while also being mindful of budget. This year, our theme was Engagement and Assessment, so we compiled a list of speakers we felt aligned with the theme and allotted funds to spend on the keynote. These names were derived from our own research along with suggestions from coworkers and colleagues across the state. Building the list of potential keynotes remains important to the success of our conference because an engaging keynote can make the conference more vibrant by energizing all participants throughout the long conference day.

After our first keynote could no longer participate, the committee addressed the list of backup options. Once we found ourselves in need of a keynote to fit our new format, we set about contacting Sharon Eisner, who had been recommended to us. We reached out via email with a pitch about what the conference was and if we could meet to discuss the possibility of her acting as our keynote. In our meeting we discussed the complexities of presenting over WebEx, a challenge to be sure, as well as our timeline and what the Professor felt she could do as our keynote. It was an energizing and productive meeting for the co-chairs. They then presented to the rest of the committee information provided by the professor, including an abstract of the keynote speech. We agreed the speaker fit our goals and theme, prepared a contract, and were able to check off the keynote with confidence.

Moving online was going to be a challenge and required contacting all the presenters to see if their presentations could work in a virtual format or if they would be able to do it. While we still had 10 presenters express an interest, we had other presentations from interested parties that we could also use if that number dwindled. Luckily, we never had to refer back to that list, as all the interested presenters were able to attend and present.

Without a list of potential speakers, we would have been scrambling. Using our networks to find names and leads for speakers and keeping those names in a list for easy access in case the situation changes helped us be successful with our conference. While these lists take time and effort to create and compile, by starting early and tapping existing networks both within the library and across the state, we can maintain a set of potential pre-vetted speakers. By maintaining a list of potential presenters and keynotes, the Paraprofessional Committee was able to stay ahead of reduced participation or hesitancy of presenters. Our virtual format led many presenters to adjust, and our keynote was especially excited to prepare for the new virtual tech set up. By creating early communication and having back up options, future conference can experience the same success and trouble-shooting opportunities with presenters, ensuring a wide range of participation on coherent and enriching topics.

## **Connecting Attendees to the Virtual Option**

While the sudden shift to a virtual conference was daunting in terms of logistics, it became apparent that attendance to a virtual conference had potential to be larger than an in-person event. With the boundaries of a physical environment now obsolete, the worry of an attendance limit vanished.

In the past, recruitment to our in-person conference included sending promotional emails to past library Paraprofessional Conference attendees, library listservs, and other assorted library staff contacts. Outreach to organizations, such as the North Carolina Library Association and ECU's Master of Library Science program, was key in spreading the word about our conference to those who may potentially attend for the first time.

One potential positive for the delay of the conference was that many individuals had been working remotely in some capacity since early April. This provided them with ample time to adjust to virtual meetings and a virtual workplace. While remote working is never ideal, the silver lining for the planning committee was that attendees would have had some experience with teleworking software by the time our conference was held. This could help us avoid too many issues of new users having problems during the conference.

Utilizing our connections and listservs, we found it beneficial to spread the word that we were moving the conference online and to the WebEx platform. By doing so, we ensured that our adjusted presenters were prepared in a timely fashion and comfortable with the chosen platform for presenting. WebEx was simple and intuitive enough for our staff to use when the pandemic began and was and similar to other teleconference software so that we expected it to be relatively easy to adapt to for our event.

## **Working with Presenters**

With the keynote speaker arranged, attendees registering, and the move to a virtual setting fully underway, we turned our focus toward our presenters. While many of our selected group were seasoned presenters, few claimed to have much expertise presenting virtually.

To overcome this hurdle, the planning committee scheduled individual meetings with presenters a week prior to the conference. During these meetings, the conference committee members walked the presenters through the process by modeling and facilitating screen-sharing, testing microphone quality, providing feedback on the video feed, and monitoring for feedback or other technical issues. While this was occurring, other members of the committee logged in at various times and through various means to the meeting to test situations which may arise on the day of the conference. Testing scenarios included the following: audio via a telephone login, attendee with a webcam, and an individual viewing the session from their cell phone. By scheduling individual meetings with presenters beforehand, a future conference committee could benefit by addressing technical and scheduling issues before the day of the event. Often, during the face-to-face conference, these same adjustments need to be made, but give the virtual standing of the situation, we found preparedness was key to our success in working with presenters.

During these sessions, presenters were also given an overview of the format of each session. Each presenter would have a host, a member of the committee, who would introduce the session and the presenter. The host would begin recording each presentation to share with the attendees after the conference with the presenter's approval. The chat and attendees would be monitored by the host who would facilitate the question-and-answer period at the end so that presenters could focus on sharing their content. Hosts and other members of the committee would also monitor the chat keeping an eye out for questions or any problems which may arise. Finally, the hosts would help wrap up sessions and move attendees to the next session.

While time consuming, these pre-conference meetings were highly beneficial. During the conference there were no technical hiccups with presenters who met with the committee beforehand. A post-conference survey sent to presenters also reinforced the benefits of the sessions. Half of the presenters completed the survey, and 100% of respondents replied that WebEx was easy to use. Given the lack of technical problems with the presenters, 4 out of 5 indicated that they would be willing to present virtually in the future. Furthermore, when asked how the conference committee could improve interactions with presenters in the future, one presenter responded, "The committee was very gracious and helpful with those of us with limited experience in doing a virtual event." Two other presenters also remarked on the committee's helpfulness. By working with presenters beforehand to demo their presentations and prepare them for situations which may arise, their confidence with presenting virtually increased and the natural anxiety that comes with speaking at a conference was reduced. In turn, this led to higher quality presentations and a better conference experience for presenters and attendees.

### **The Big Day Arrives**

The adjustment from a physical conference to a virtual setting was not easy. In years past, we needed to reserve rooms months in advance, occasionally negotiating room swaps with other departments in the university that needed library space on the same day. The night before the conference would often include setting up hundreds of chairs, checking and double-checking equipment, prepping tables for food, and setting up coffee makers. Readyng our space for 150 or more attendees was time-intensive and required a lot of planning to make sure it all went

smoothly, and, even then, one or two things would be missed, and we would be rushing conference day to address.

Typically, our day-of conference preparations involve an "all hands-on deck" type of approach in terms of utilizing the library staff and faculty to carry out duties for the conference. In years past we have had anywhere from 25-40 volunteers, needing every one of those to ensure a smooth flow of operations. Organizing the volunteers and ensuring that they were appropriately utilized in necessary roles was a large enough job that the committee designated one member to focus solely on this throughout the planning process and on the day of the conference. Much of the conference set-up occurred the day prior to the event. Day-of conference volunteers often assisted attendees with parking and directions, set up food and snacks, ensured technology worked in classrooms, and much more. For this event, the hours spent on conference set up were instead spent coordinating with presenters, navigating technical issues, and testing equipment.

The physical set up for the 2020 conference consisted of unlocking an instructional classroom an hour before the conference was set to start. The major issue faced was an incorrect password for the main WebEx station, which was resolved in 10 minutes with a few messages between our IT department (although it was a nail-biting 10 minutes). The classroom allowed for social distancing, with outlets and plenty of desk space for everyone. This allowed for the committee members who needed to be physically present during the conference, for technical support, the adequate space to socially distance and maintain the University-presented standards for COVID19 safety. Instead of greeting instructors at the door, we met them in WebEx rooms and tested equipment

before starting the official session. No major issues occurred, thanks in part to our test runs with presenters the week before. These test runs and check-ins with presenters were greatly appreciated and allowed for troubleshooting problems that arose in the new virtual setting in which we hosted. To reduce any confusion for attendees, and avoiding management of multiple WebEx meeting rooms, the committee decided to utilize the university assigned WebEx room for our Paraprofessional account for all sessions. This was done to allow for easier transition between sessions and for users at home. It did create some issues with adding new presenters, but those acting as hosts for the different sessions were able to quickly resolve them.

The day before the conference, the committee finalized who would be physically present in the instructional classroom and who would virtually monitor the sessions from home. Having a mix of committee members attending virtually and hosting physically in the library allowed for some committee members to have the same experience as attendees, so they could clearly call out any issues or problems that may arise. Having individuals in person in the building to act as hosts allowed for a constant internet connection, relieving fears that a host's home connection could cut out, as well as offering a 'home base' where issues could be discussed and fixes could be applied in real time. Having a combination allowed for the conference to provide an optimal environment for all attendees and presenters.

The conference was opened with remarks by a planning committee co-chair and library assistant director. The planning committee co-chair provided a brief history of the conference and addressed the move to an online format, as well as the various house-keeping rules for the conference,

including staying muted and posting questions in the chat. The assistant director spoke about the importance of engagement in libraries and with their communities emphasizing the conference theme of Engagement and Assessment.

As the opening remarks continued, we watched in earnest as the attendees signed in. We had had more than 300 registered attendees—a number that astounded us, being more than any of the previous fifteen years of the hosted conference—but we did not know how things would look once the conference was fully underway.

As the keynote speaker began, we started to breathe more easily. While not 300, we had well over 150 attendees sign in for the start of the session. And while attendance numbers would not be finalized until after we double checked login information, we had an impressive showing for the keynote. Even in the virtual setting, the speaker was able to engage with the audience and received several positive comments in our follow-up survey.

The other presentations went very well, and other than a slight sound issue with one presenter, we were able to have a successful first day. Members of the planning committee created copies of the chat logs, monitored chat for questions, and reported individuals who turned their microphones on so the host could mute.

The second day of the conference was comparable to the first. We were even able to maintain similar numbers of attendees throughout the day, although there was a slight drop off of 15-25% of attendees, depending on the session. We felt that we would likely lose some attendees if we added a second day, but we were pleased that we were able to maintain a steady number of attendees across both days. We wrapped up the conference by having a co-chair thank our sponsors,

presenters and attendees, and sprinkle in some library jokes to keep everyone entertained.

### **Survey Says...**

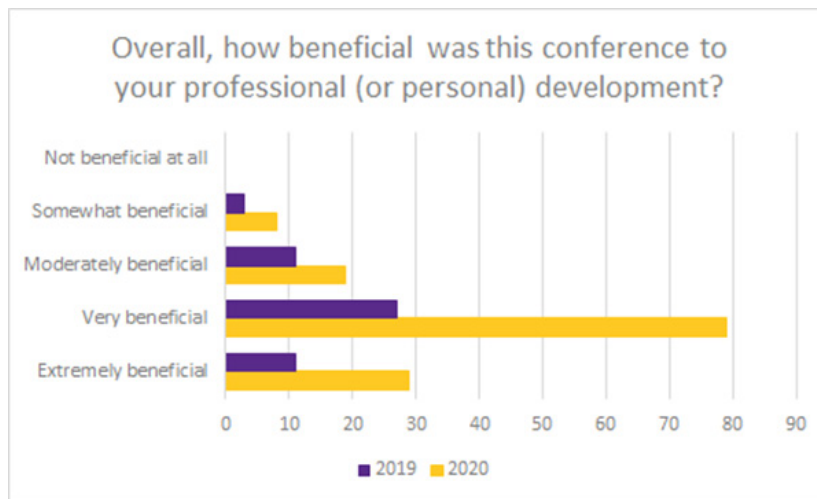
As the conference wrapped up, the committee worked on getting feedback from attendees through a survey. Achieving high response rates for surveys can be tricky, even when using incentives like gift cards or other prizes. Past conference surveys had response rates ranging from 15% to 70%. For the 2020 conference, we offered gift bags as an incentive to complete the survey and ended up with a response rate of almost 40% of all attendees, or about 135 responses. This was an improvement of over 250% from the previous year's survey.

Based on the survey responses, the hours of effort were not in vain. More than 1 in 5 respondents said the event was an extremely beneficial conference for their professional development. This was a slight drop from the previous year of 25%. Nearly 60% of responses indicated that the conference was very beneficial to their professional development, compared to 46% in 2019. This is a significant increase and is something about which we are incredibly proud considering the circumstances under which the conference occurred.

The attendees also responded very positively to the virtual setting, with 97% of respondents saying they liked the online conference. Feedback also indicated that in the future we should consider offering certain sessions online, even if the conference is in person. The committee is wholeheartedly interested in pursuing this option.

Another goal of the conference is to expand our reach and allow for more members of the paraprofessional community to attend the conference. While we had not asked the question in previous conference surveys, we wanted





to know how many attendees had attended the Paraprofessional Conference before: 45% were first-time attendees. This was an amazing number to see and provided us with more evidence and motivation to offer part or all of the conference online and free of charge in the future.

*“Conducting result surveys that highlight the outreached thoughts and opinions of presenters and attendees is extremely important to the success of a virtual conference.”*

With all of the changes to a virtual conference and juggling the challenges of scheduling over two days, there was some concern that moving to a two-day conference could result in much lower attendance from Day 1 to Day 2. In reality, 70% of respondents said they attended both days of the conference, while 20% attended Day 1 alone and 10% attending Day 2. This retention helped justify holding the conference over two days and gives us some evidence to explore holding multi-day conferences in the future. While it is difficult to extrapolate why attendees were willing to join both days of sessions—for example, it could be a result of individuals working from home and having reduced hours in their library—it demonstrates the

demand for our conference and the professional development opportunity it provides.

Conducting result surveys that highlight the outreached thoughts and opinions of presenters and attendees is extremely important to the success of a virtual conference. By obtaining

the feedback, the Committee is continuously working towards improvements for future years and has supported documented evidence for what they can be working towards in the immediate year. For a successful virtual conference, surveys and group outreach are encouraged to get this type of direct feedback, even when participants are not directly interacting. This continues the theme of virtual interaction even after the virtual conference has concluded, and even sets up the tone for a potential virtual conference to come.

### Planning Committee Debrief

In previous years, the committee reviewed the feedback received and debated suggestions that may make the conference better at a local restaurant

or over a box of donuts and coffee. This year, we did not have that luxury due to the pandemic. However, we still were able to meet over WebEx to go over the surveys and share experiences which we can improve upon for attendees, presenters, and ourselves. Pulling suggestions from the surveys, we hope to implement some if we move back to an in-person event or remain virtual. These include more audio checks with members, offering a WebEx for attendees to check equipment, and announcing decisions about the conference earlier.

Once the conference wrapped, the committee took a month off. During that time, we decompressed, continued to reflect on our virtual event, and brainstormed ideas for the 2021 conference, including ideas for keynote speakers and potential presenters. This year was different, as we were pushed back a month from our usual conference. We have been hard at work meeting and discussing opportunities to make next year's conference broader and more appealing. We have a lot to consider as we move on into the next phase of planning for 2021 but are extremely excited for the opportunities and challenges that we will face.

### Conclusion

Every year, the goal of the Paraprofessional Conference is to provide

professional development opportunities for paraprofessionals in public, academic, and school libraries across the state of North Carolina. Despite a pandemic and shifting to a virtual setting, we feel like we were able to accomplish this goal in 2020.

It took a lot of experiences from other virtual events to help us produce the plan we were able to implement this year. From having to pause our conference just days before opening registration and overcoming the litany of technology-related problems that arise from individuals working from home or using a new conferencing software, the planning and preparation for this year's conference was unlike any we had done before. Yet, it was possible due to the best practices learned from others among the first to hold large scale, virtual events.

Worries about attendance and serving our stated goal were important to consider as we moved online. Luckily, they were not as big of an issue once we started seeing individuals log in. This is due in large part to our frequent and open communication methods with attendees. We had attendees from the western part of North Carolina, who normally cannot attend due to travel limitations for paraprofessionals, as well as nearby states like Tennessee and Florida. We even had international attendees, from Nigeria,

West Africa and from Tbilisi, Georgia! In addition to expanding our attendee reach, we also had presenters from across the state, including one from Iowa.

With the increase in survey response rate, broader geographic reach, and expanded audience and presenter opportunities, the committee feels that the move online was a success. The move to a virtual conference was a bit daunting at first. However, approaching the conference with our shared experiences from other virtual events, we were able to compile a list of concerns and, one by one, move down that list and check them off. It was those shared experiences that helped us put on our conference and walk away feeling accomplished. The committee remained in weekly contact during the crucial planning months of April and May, as the co-chairs logically divvied up new roles and responsibilities for members. The constant email contact and weekly WebEx meetings kept members informed and confident in our new roles. The communication was especially important as confusion, disconnect, and doubt could have prohibited the conference from moving forward in an organized and orderly fashion.

By following the given recommendations listed here, our hope is to heed guidance for other groups looking to

successfully transition their conference during this virtual age. While every conference is unique and has its own thematic highlights, by having early and proper communication, maintaining direct lists, following up with presenters, and providing follow-up statistical surveys, a virtual conference can become a lasting success.

While we cherish hosting the event in person, knowing that we are able to move the conference online provides many new options as we navigate the pandemic and the unknown future following the development of 2020. Even if we are given all clear for the 2021 conference to be face to face, we may explore future options for online sessions given the positive feedback and experience. We encourage those who are interested in hosting an online conference to learn from our process, communicate as frequently as possible, and focus on the positive outcomes for success. These tips, paired with an engaged team dedicated to the goals of the conference no matter the format, you can provide high quality professional development within your communities. The result creates an experience that provides great professional development to paraprofessionals and others across the state leading to future developments and opportunities for all.



<http://www.nclaonline.org/>

# Pushing Libraries: Yesterday and Tomorrow

From the pages of *North Carolina Libraries* Volume 50, No. 2 (Summer 1992): 73-75

How nattering it is to be asked to write an article for *North Carolina Libraries* a decade after my first presentation to the North Carolina Public Library Director's Association. So much has happened to our libraries in the decade of the 80s and their future is so clouded, that this article provides me a unique opportunity to reflect upon excellence and ponder opportunities. The first part of this article is devoted to reminiscing about the spirit and energy that pervaded the North Carolina library establishment in the early 80s. The second is about a quiet period, and the third discusses possibilities for the first half of the 90s. If there is a bias, it is that I believe in the concept of free and available libraries appropriate to the times....look backward with me.

In 1981, during my first full term in office, Mary Jo Godwin was the Edgecombe County librarian and the president-elect of the newly formed North Carolina Public Library Director's Association. Throughout my campaign, she had helped me research issues that either cropped up during the campaign, or that I wanted to raise and address as a candidate. In addition to being very thorough and competent, Mary Jo was always friendly and courteous. Going to our library was a pleasure not only for me but for every other when I reviewed my files for this candidate who used Mary Jo as a resource. She treated every one of us the same — fairly and without bias. Ms. Godwin never burned a political bridge because she knew that she might have to come home that way sometime. When she

became the association's president in 1982, Mary Jo asked me to do a seminar on how to lobby legislators. That seminar was one part of a statewide effort called the "Three Million Dollar Push."

Every librarian had a vision about the local effects and the statewide result that the "Three Million Dollar Push" would have on North Carolina libraries. In libraries across the state there was excitement and energy. Librarians

*“Don't try to be objective; that's the legislator's job. Be biased.”*

and their staffs held parties for legislators and Friends to build consensus for the "Three Million Dollar Push." The Secretary of Cultural Resources, Sara Hodgkins, publicly stated that libraries were the number one budget priority of that department. Senator Harold Hardison, chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and Representative Al Adams, co-chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, had committed to the push. David McKay, the State Librarian, had gotten grudging agreement on a new formula for the allocation of state aid. Libraries had become a squeaky wheel thanks to grassroots political activity by librarians like Nancy Bates, John Jones, Nancy Massey and Bill Bridgman and the dedication of a few visionaries. The excitement overshadowed deep internal conflict, however, because the new formula diminished local political clout. Although there were last minute attempts to change the formula, none were successful. The three million

dollars were included in the expansion budget for 1983-84, and the rest is part of our library history. Today, fewer than half of the 1991 House of Representatives were in office when the three million dollar push occurred.

When I reviewed my files for this article, I came across two lists of hints for lobbying legislators that need to be republished as we get ready for the library push of the 90s. The first comes from the minutes of the NCPLDA

meeting May 4-5, 1982 (*editor's note:* These comments were made by Mr. Mavretic himself):

- Have a checklist on each legislator and get a commitment. Nail them to the wall if they press or if they change their votes.
- The squeaky wheel gets the oil; that's the American way. Letters do make a difference.
- Consensus is absolutely critical.
- Letters should be short, one page double spaced, all caps.
- When visiting legislators, keep your delegation small (one to three people). Be on time and leave early. Give time for legislators to react and write down thoughts. Don't try to be objective; that's the legislator's job. Be biased.
- Little things go a long way, especially photographic opportunities within the library.
- Most legislators view your product as "More and better books." You should stress that the libraries exist to

provide service to the people. That is the key for legislators. PLDA should become the established authority on facts for North Carolina Public Libraries. Each legislator should have a three ring binder on public libraries that is up-to-date and accurate. Your numbers must be creditable; they should be checked with the State Library and the legislative staff before distributing them to the legislature.

- Long-range goals are needed and must be accepted in your policy statements. They should be used for growth and for cuts. The right question for a planner is, "What should I be doing in the next five to ten years?"
- A good strategy is to tell people where you will cut, and then cut it if you have to when you don't get funding. You gain creditability.
- Review your performance by determining if you did what you said you were going to. Tell your legislator how you used the money.
- During 1981, librarians were their own worst enemies. Fight inside the family, but be united and present a solid front to the legislature. You either hang together or hang separately.
- With regard to the proposed State Aid Formula for public libraries, we had some questions about the income variable, but it is the best vehicle to date. Be sure you want this formula, because it usually takes six years to get it enacted. The library community needs to be unanimously enthusiastic in its support of any formula.
- A special supplementary money bill reflects weakness. It should be a part of the main budget package-continuation or expansion.
- Libraries are jumping through the hoop for peanuts.
- No formula will take the library community down the tube in the legislature.

- You need to have a plan, then go get the dollars to implement the plan.
- Get your funding through planning and through consensus.

The second list comes from the NCPLDA minutes of a meeting held August 19-20, 1982 (*editor's note*: These comments were made by Frederick J. Glazer):

- You've got to have an absolute solid front. If one legislator is not for it, they will split.
- You need enthusiasm to create visibility and universal acceptance of your proposal.
- Libraries have more people supporting them than other governmental agencies. Nobody opposes libraries and their funding. West Virginia State Librarian Fred Glazer calls it "Exploitation of confrontations."
- There is no known repellent to libraries. Most issues have pros and cons, but not the public library.
- Eleven thousand letters from Friends to the Governor will influence! There are no "Friends" for the sanitation and highway departments. Let your citizens express their needs to the legislators and how libraries have helped them.
- Conduct library appreciation days for legislators. Conduct letter writing campaigns thanking your legislators for their library support whether they gave any or not.
- Create opportunities for large crowds; take photographs, especially of legislators in the library and get them in the paper.
- Get a well-known personality such as Frank Gifford or George Plimpton to autograph books for legislators. Make it a non-adversarial confrontation.
- The best lobbyists are voters who are library users.
- The library is the only volunteer government service that is a pleasurable experience to the public. We

need to organize these users to support the library.

- Each year there is a new theme for the budget push in West Virginia; a three dollar check on titles and book-marks, the library "Now" account, "Make a statement for state aid," ties and scarfs for legislators with the library theme, "The Library Pie Needs State Dough."
- Keep your themes and activities plain and simple.
- Libraries are not budget busters. Your legislators need to be stroked year round. There are basically two methods, "the scatter shot" and "the sniper method."
- You have got to have enthusiasm and excitement. You've got to believe.
- You've got a great product. There's nothing to be ashamed of. You should use Pentagon statistics for every circulation transaction. For every book checked out, you have at least 10 circulation transactions. You need to create your own measurement for the statistical people.
- Remind commissioners and legislators that the county budget is not their money. It's the people's money, and the people can change their minds on how it is allocated through pressure.
- West Virginia conducts a two week training program for librarians to keep them aware and conscious of local elected officials. They set up trust squads for missionary work. If the librarian doesn't listen or have a positive attitude, then the Trustees are alerted.
- Library appreciation day in West Virginia happens just before the state hearings on the library budget. There are good special speakers and special gimmicks to hand to all legislators.
- We need to work together to get the money we need. There's got to be a new day.
- Be organized! Get people out!

In addition to containing a lot of common sense, what's striking about these two lists — one from the State Librarian of West Virginia and the other from a North Carolina legislator — is the urging for consensus and the parallels with the successful "Three Million Dollar Push."

In the second half of the '80s, the Five Year Plans of David McKay, the formula for the allocation of state aid, and the six million dollars for libraries joined peach pies and blueberry baskets (thank you berry much) as givens in the state library business. The library wheel rolled along with only an occasional squeak from the Quiz Bowl, or about intellectual freedom, or a Library Bill of Rights, or librarian certification, or satellite dishes. The legislator's library fact books that were religiously updated in the early 80s got put away toward the end of the decade as budget shortfalls, hiring freezes, and recession facts captured everyone's attention — everyone, that is, except a few 90s visionaries who, like their 80s counterparts, know that the next squeaky wheel time for libraries is just

“*...be united and present a solid front to the legislature. You either hang together or hang separately.*”

around the corner. This time the debate will be more about electronics and attitudes than money. No one anticipated the electronic explosion of the 80s and the effects it would have on library science, and no one expected to see the costs of electronic transmission plummet as quickly as they did.

Legislators in general do not appreciate the upheaval that computers are causing in library science, and they don't understand the switching station role that libraries may play in the technological/service world of twenty-first century America. The notion that

individual empowerment is directly dependent upon library configuration has yet to become part of our political lexicon. Substantive debate over the quality control of distance education is not on any legislative agenda. Debates about the relative values of books and networks do not occur in legislative study commissions. Likewise, the utilities commission has yet to start sorting through the boundary changes between communications, information, and entertainment.

My attitude about librarians is about the same after ten years. Mary Jo Godwin, President of NCPLDA in 1982, and Jackie Beach, President of the NCPLDA in 1992, both Directors of the Edgecombe County Memorial Library, are my personal librarians as I am their personal representative. I go to Jackie Beach when I need information — just as I go to my hardware man when I want nails. I believe the information she helps me get, or gets for me, is accurate, and I rely upon it. I suspect that nearly everyone of my colleagues in the General Assembly feels the same about their local librar-

ians, whether public, school, or academic. Beyond the home-town librarian, attitudes are not so clear. The fact that, as Howard McGinn states, “library schools are being closed, recruiting is stagnant, library budgets are being decimated, and libraries themselves are being absorbed...,” tells me that elected officials do not have a basic commitment to libraries and librarians. Further, there seems to be increasing concern that the profession itself is at a definitional crossroad and unsure of its direction. The time seems right to begin the debate over the role of

librarians in individual empowerment in twenty-first century democracy and the power of libraries in a technological society. Like most political debates, it needs to get started around something tangible with which legislators can identify, something simple so that the debate begins easily, and something expensive enough to get everybody's attention. My first thought is to debate transferring the CRAY- YMP supercomputer to the state library system in 1994 (when the next generation needs to come on-line at MCNC's supercomputing center). However, research shows that while the YMP is awesome at high speed computing, it is not designed to be the keystone of an integrated library system. Next, I talked with Doug Koontz and Julie Lahann at IBM about IBM-RS-6000s or IBM-AS-400s as the base for an integrated system. Those discussions led to a rough estimate of five million dollars a year for one-time, non-recurring expenditures for hardware and software for each of the next five years. A maximum of a twenty-five million dollar capital appropriation would enable North Carolina to become the national leader in library evolution. The target amount is big enough to attract attention; the hardware and software is tangible; and, to politicians, the goal appears straightforward. For librarians, however, the real issue is the additional cost of a transition to mass acquisitions and processing.

Now the question is, “How do we begin?” It seems to me that our State Librarian, Howard McGinn, has laid that out very well in his six points in the Winter 1991 edition of *North Carolina Libraries*.

1. Hold the state conference every year.
2. Reorganize NCLA in order to deal with issues that face the entire profession.
3. Elect NCLA presidents on leadership rather than a rotation.

4. Put substance and purpose in NCLA meetings.
5. Hold the NCLA conference in conjunction with non-library associations.
6. Limit membership to NCLA to professional librarians.

What the association chooses to do relative to Howard's six points may very well hinge on the debate over six other issues:

1. The need for dependable budgets that enable every library user to have access to the enormous amount of available information and that define the missions assigned to libraries.
2. The responsibility of public schools, community colleges, and the university system for teaching computer and information literacy.

3. The balance between books and electronic inventory, and a commitment to a standard of over 2 books per capita.
4. The return on taxpayer investment in public information assets and the related marketing plans for public information services and products that compete with commercial providers.
5. The relationship between electronic highways and technology libraries and the relationship of electronic highways to traditional infrastructure.
6. The need for a comprehensive information policy that provides access, yet respects confidentiality, and a resolution of the copyright dilemma.

Even the most superficial response to these six issues and Howard's six points should be the notion that the relationships between librarians, libraries, and the tax paying public is under increasing tension, and that energetic activity is required... at the 1992 North Carolina Association Annual Conference.

## North Carolina Libraries

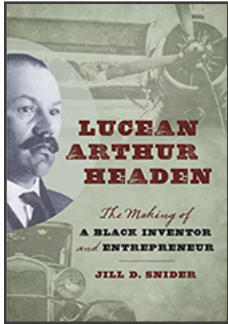
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All issues are available online free-of-charge at <http://www.ncl.ecu.edu>.

Back issues are available from the North Carolina Library Association office at 1811 Capital Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27604, for \$8 an issue for those years prior to going online in 2002, or \$50 for the annual print compilation beginning with Vol. 60 (2002).

# North Carolina Books

Compiled by Al Jones



## **Lucean Arthur Headen: The Making of a Black Inventor and Entrepreneur**

Jill D. Snider  
Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North  
Carolina Press, 2020.  
310 pp. \$29.95.  
ISBN 978-1-4696-5435-5

Is it possible for an individual to overcome professional/personal obstacles and still have a significant impact on automotive and aviation history? Throughout the pages of the book, *Lucean Arthur Headen: The Making of a Black Inventor and Entrepreneur*, author Jill D. Snider answers this question by introducing readers to the career of Lucean Arthur Headen. Born in 1879, Lucean Headen confronted obstacles which made the possibility of making a name for himself seem slim at best. However, despite the challenge of growing up in the era of Jim Crow restrictions, Headen did manage to become a Pullman Company “sleeper car” porter, the founder of the “Headen Motor Company” (with branches in Chicago and Albany, GA), and later, a chauffeur for Robert McCormick, the publisher of the *Chicago Tribune* newspaper. Eventually, Headen relocated several times during his lifetime (eventually settling in England) in order to combat limited opportunities to showcase inventions, and a realization by this African American inventor and entrepreneur that a more responsive market could help advertise his “creative genius.” During his lifetime, Headen achieved 11 different patents, including the following: a “manifold” (special gasket to protect engine’s crank, and used for commercial vehicles & tractors) as well as an anti-icing method for airplane wings.

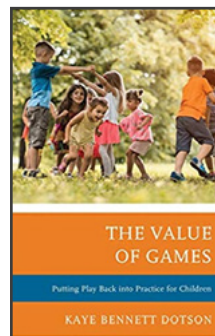
In this book, the author includes references to notable Lucean Headen inventions, namely the hand-built Headen “Pace Setter” and “Headen Special” automobiles. Additionally, an extensive bibliography includes primary sources, secondary sources, and a list of the patents Lucean Headen earned over the course of his career. Some of the patents listed were as follows: “ignition device” (patent granted October 28, 1930), vaporizing manifold (patent granted

October 15, 1935); pre-ignition device (patent sealed November 8, 1933); Anti-dilution gasket (patent granted September 7, 1937); a method for deicing propellers (patent granted February 10, 1939); and a plough share tip (patent granted August 23, 1950).

Jill D. Snider is a historian & writer who resides in Chapel Hill, NC. Over the course of her career, Jill D. Snider has been a technical writer, program & business analyst, archivist, and historian. Additionally, the author has been employed as a research fellow at the Smithsonian Institution, National Air and Space Museum, the American Historical Association, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

This book is intended to showcase the efforts of Lucean Arthur Headen to overcome personal and professional obstacles in order to make a considerable contribution to automotive and aviation history. Because of its specific scope and subject matter, *Lucean Arthur Headen: The Making of a Black Inventor and Entrepreneur* should be suitable for inclusion in any academic or special library with a focus on African American history.

*David W. Young*  
University of North Carolina at Pembroke



## **The Value of Games: Putting Play Back into Practice for Children**

Kaye Bennett Dotson  
Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2020.  
165 pp. \$50.00.  
ISBN 978-1-4758-4639-3.  
Paperback ISBN 978-1-4758-4640-9.  
E-book ISBN 978-1-4758-4641-6.

How do children learn? How can they grow in experience and establish friendships and relationships? Games in childhood are a fun way to introduce young people to the world and others. Child development involves physical, intellectual, social, and emotional changes. Games can give children opportunities for communicating with peers, interacting socially with others, learning to deal with

frustration, making new friends and enjoying time with friends, gaining skills in reasoning and decision making, and understanding outcomes and results. Play and games are an integral part of that growth process.

Children today have daily exposure to electronic games and technology. Author Dr. Kaye Bennett Dotson, associate professor in the Department of Interdisciplinary Professions at East Carolina University, intends for this book to provide adults with a collection of games and instructions that they can introduce to children to encourage active play away from devices. In the digital age spontaneous free play is not as likely to occur, so it may require adults to intentionally plan such opportunities.

Active, physical games detailed in the text fall under categories such as games of chase and tag; games of song and dance, rhyme and rhythm; string games; blindfold games; and jumping, skipping games. It could be helpful to view online videos of children demonstrating games to supplement the book's written instructions. Games can be adapted in support of the curriculum as with Sight Word Bingo, and the author provides ideas and templates for such variations. Dotson's explanation of Creative Commons copyright licenses will help guide teachers to appropriately select and attribute online resources related to games that they intend to use in their curriculum.

Dotson encourages adults and educators to support outdoor, active play, but she also shares ideas for indoor or rainy day activities. More sedentary options are included in the chapter on board games, which describes many popular classic board games, such as Clue, Trivial Pursuit, and Operation. Whether played indoors or outdoors, games that encourage a child to use their imagination can help children understand more about the world. A number are included in the chapter, "Pretend and Make-Believe Games."

The age range for participation is primarily preschool through fifth grade, but the most basic game, Pat-a-Cake, would interest toddlers. The chapter, "National Ball Games and Informal Game Adaptations," includes the basic rules for baseball, basketball and related games, football, and soccer, along with several other games that can be played by older children (and adults).

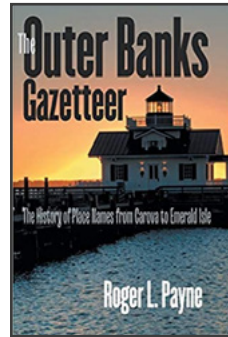
A sample assignment describes how a teacher could help children join in preserving games by writing instructions for games that they play or interviewing an adult by asking about games they have played and documenting the explanations in writing, perhaps in the style of a graphic novel, with a video of the game being played.

Appendices offer a resource list, a sample field day schedule, and a bibliography. The index includes games

alphabetically by name. The text does not include variations to the games that could address inclusion for children with disabilities or special needs, but a number of the illustrations depict children in a wheelchair or using pediatric walking aids for mobility.

Teachers, camp counselors, and parents will find this compilation of games useful in expanding the range of games they can introduce to their students and children.

*Christine Fischer*  
*UNC Greensboro*



***The Outer Banks Gazetteer: The History of Place Names from Carova to Emerald Isle***

Roger L. Payne  
Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021. 338 pp. \$24.00.  
ISBN 978-1-4696-6228-2.

Native North Carolinians have always loved the beaches, lighthouses, and seafood that can be found along the North Carolina coast and no coastal area appeals more to native adventurers and beach lovers than the barrier islands of the Outer Banks. Roger L. Payne, executive secretary emeritus of the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, has used his love of the Outer Banks to create the ultimate guide to place names in the area. *The Outer Banks Gazetteer: The History of Place Names from Carova to Emerald Isle* is the result of his lifelong love of, and curiosity about, named features on the Outer Banks.

The present title revises and expands Payne's 1985 book, *Place Names of the Outer Banks*, by quadrupling the number of place name entries found in the original source. The book's front matter serves as the reader's road map explaining that *The Outer Banks Gazetteer* includes the barrier island system from the North Carolina-Virginia border in Currituck County to Bogue Inlet in Carteret County. The preface describes the author's love of Outer Banks toponymy, the importance of gazetteers in preserving an area's history and culture, and how digitization and availability of primary and secondary sources created a more comprehensive book that includes most geographic place names in the region. The well-written introduction defines the physical parameters of the Outer Banks, discusses the use of Native American names in the area, describes why some types of transient locations are excluded, and provides

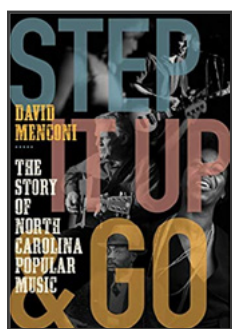


context for naming conventions. The “how to” section explains how the individual entries are organized and what type of content is included.

The body of the gazetteer consists of more than 3,000 alphabetically arranged entries of towns, communities, inlets, beaches, rivers, and islands, including locations and physical features that no longer exist today. The seven maps of present and historic place names feature towns and communities, barrier islands, inlets, townships, and U. S. Geological Survey topographic maps of the area and assist in visually orienting the reader. One of the strengths of this book is the selected annotated bibliography that the author used when compiling and verifying the entries. Most of the gazetteer’s entries include references to one or more of the sources in the annotated bibliography unless the place name results from “local use” and could not be verified through these sources. The annotated bibliography would be a great resource for other researchers to use when searching for primary and secondary sources about the Outer Banks.

This book is recommended for North Carolina public and academic libraries with strong Eastern North Carolina coastal collections. Individuals who live on the Outer Banks, or dream of retiring to the barrier islands, would enjoy receiving this book as a gift. It provides a perfect way to explore the area’s history and culture through its many colorful place names.

Teresa LePors  
Elon University



***Step It Up and Go: The Story of North Carolina Popular Music, From Blind Boy Fuller and Doc Watson to Nina Simone and Superchunk***

David Menconi  
Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2020. 314 pp. \$30.00.  
ISBN 978-1-4696-5935-0.

What do Charlie Poole, Doc Watson, The Embers, Arthur Smith, the “5” Royales, Nina Simone, and Scotty McCreery have in common? These musicians and groups had a significant impact on the development of music television variety shows, bluegrass, beach music, country, and rhythm & blues across North Carolina. In the book, *Step It Up and Go: The Story of North Carolina Popular Music, From Blind Boy Fuller and Doc Watson to*

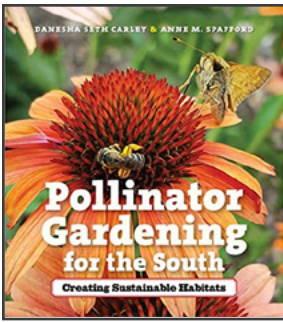
*Nina Simone and Superchunk*, author David Menconi traces the evolution of specific music genres over several decades. For instance, groups such as The Embers helped popularize beach music and influenced eager participants to dance “the shag” at concerts in both North Carolina and South Carolina.

Throughout the book, David Menconi describes a wide variety of specific musicians and television personalities who have left an indelible mark on the North Carolina music industry. Specifically, Doc Watson (bluegrass & country music performer and recipient of a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award), musician and television host Arthur Smith (leader of the acclaimed “Carolina Calling” morning television show for WBTV in Charlotte, North Carolina), and Earl Scruggs (one of the performers for the 1962 debut of *The Beverly Hillbillies* theme song, “The Ballad of Jed Clampett”) are mentioned. David Menconi also includes the influence of the television show, *American Idol* on North Carolina after the success of contestants Clay Aiken (2003 runner-up) and Scotty McCreery (2011 winner).

For specific musicians & bands, the author includes the year of induction into the North Carolina Music Hall of Fame (Doc Watson was inducted in 2010). In this book, a selected bibliography, discography, and numerous photographs are added. Author Menconi states that much of his material for the book is based on his own reporting as well as past stories included in the *Raleigh News & Observer*, *Rolling Stone*, and *Carolina Alumni Review*. Where possible, David Menconi includes quotations from interviews with close relatives of featured musicians.

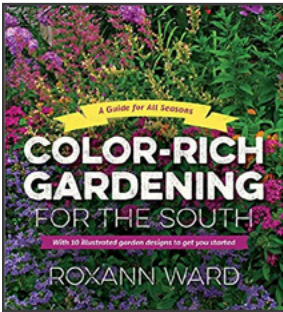
David Menconi resides in Raleigh, North Carolina, and worked for 28 years as a staff writer for the *Raleigh News & Observer*. Besides *Step It Up and Go*, author David Menconi wrote *Ryan Adams: Losing, a Story of Whiskeytown* (2012), and co-wrote with author Ray Benson, *Comin’ Right at Ya: How a Jewish Yankee Hippie Went Country, or the Often Outrageous History of Asleep at the Wheel* (2015). Because of its specific scope, *Step It Up and Go: The Story of North Carolina Popular Music, From Blind Boy Fuller and Doc Watson to Nina Simone and Superchunk* would be suitable for inclusion in any academic library with a focus on North Carolina music history or popular culture.

David W. Young  
University of North Carolina at Pembroke



***Pollinator Gardening for the South: Creating Sustainable Habitats***

Danesha S. Carley and  
Anne M. Spafford  
Chapel Hill: University of North  
Carolina Press, 2021. 168 pp. \$24.00.  
ISBN 9781469659411.



***Color-Rich Gardening for the South***

Roxann Ward  
Chapel Hill: University of North  
Carolina Press, 2021. 152 pp. \$24.00.  
ISBN 9781469661766.

Whether dreaming of gardens during the winter or planning new designs for spring or fall planting, gardeners will find inspiration in these new books from UNC Press. Both are full of useful plant and design information, and their primary focus on either color in the garden or sustainable pollinator habitats will appeal to all with the gardening bug.

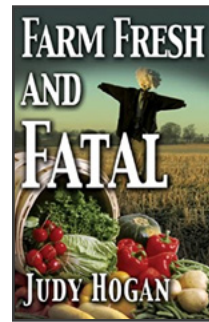
Roxann Ward is a Georgia garden designer and consultant and has been creating “color gardens” for commercial and residential clients for years. The garden templates in *Color-Rich Gardening for the South* display her years of experience with successful plants for the South and her focus on color through the seasons. Though most of her designs include shrubs and perennials, color-rich gardens typically focus on sweeps of brightly colored annuals that require a significant yearly investment. The book is perfectly arranged from site selection through soil prep, plant materials, garden design, and successful garden maintenance. Suggestions for hot sun, deep shade, and even for containers, will satisfy gardeners who love bold sweeps of color.

Danesha S. Carley and Anne M. Spafford, North Carolina State University associate professors of horticultural science, co-authored *Pollinator Gardening for the South: Creating Sustainable Habitats*. Creating gardens that provide pollinator habitat has become a focus for many environmentally conscious gardeners. The first half of their book brings us up to speed on bees, butterflies and other pollinators, as well as how pollination works. Once the reader is savvy in these areas, we can jump right into designing pollinator habitat. Instead of a focus on color,

plant selection is based on the use of primarily native perennials, grasses and shrubs that have coevolved to support our pollinators. Chapter five gives us the nuts and bolts of garden installation, and then we’re ready to think more broadly about the many places where pollinator-friendly gardens can be added to enrich the landscape. From our containers, yards and curbs to businesses and healthcare facilities, schools and greenways, museums, arboretums and golf courses, the possibilities are endless and inspiring! Useful charts about season of bloom make planning for year-round gardens easy, and photos and sketches provide good examples for garden designs.

Both of these attractive books would be appealing on a “new materials” rack for adults in public libraries and would also be useful for academic libraries that support the gardening and landscape crews on their campuses.

*Dianne Ford, Retired*  
*Elon University*



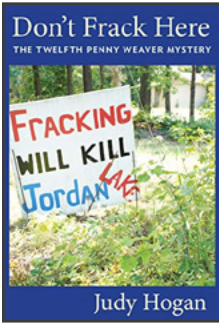
***Farm Fresh and Fatal***

Judy Hogan  
Mainly Murder Press, 2013.  
209pp. \$15.95.  
ISBN 978-0-9895804-0-3.

The citizens of fictional Shagbark County, North Carolina, gather in the town of Riverdell to sell their fresh vegetables and flowers at the farmers’ market. All is well until a well-known citizen is murdered. Penny Weaver and her friend Sammie decide to use their knowledge of the market, and the people who sell their wares there, to solve the mystery and protect a friend.

This is the fourth Penny Weaver mystery by Judy Hogan, which brings the reader into the tight-knit and surprisingly diverse Shagbark community. This is a cozy mystery. does not have the twists and turns an avid mystery reader may expect.

*Dana Glauner*  
*South Piedmont Community College*



***Don't Frack Here:  
The Twelfth Penny Weaver Mystery***

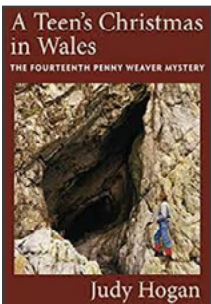
Judy Hogan  
Hoganvillaea Books, 2020.  
181pp. \$15.00.  
ISBN 978-1-6953-9004-1.

The citizens of Shagbark are not happy when they hear that fracking is coming to their agricultural county in Don't Frack Here. In Hogan's twelfth Penny Weaver mystery, the citizens are naturally upset at the thought of their water being poisoned and their farmland being laid waste by fracking runoff.

The small Shagbark community rallies together to fight off "Big Frack." Hogan depicts how people who earn their living from the land feel and react when fracking threatens their livelihoods.

Fans of Hogan will enjoy seeing favorite characters and catching up with them, but the mystery is pretty light and will not satisfy most mystery fans.

*Dana Glauner  
South Piedmont Community College*



***A Teen's Christmas in Wales***

Judy Hogan  
Hoganvillaea Books, 2020.  
181pp. \$15.00.  
ISBN 978-1-6953-9004-1.

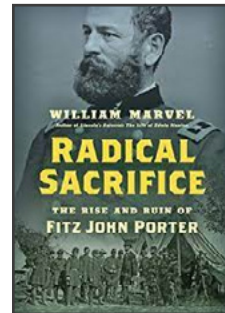
The fourteenth Penny Weaver mystery, *A Teen's Christmas in Wales*, takes readers to the small village of Gower, Wales, where Penny and her husband Kenneth are spending the Christmas holidays with their 14-year-old grandson Seb and his girlfriend Naomi. Readers are transported around the caves and other sites of Gower and into the homes of Penny's friends and neighbors.

The title of the book, an homage to Dylan Thomas' *A Child's Christmas in Wales* includes lovely descriptions of Christmas in Wales. The visits to friends leading up to Christmas and Boxing Day illustrate how Welsh people celebrate the holidays. Readers will want to explore the

caves along the rocky shores of Gower and nearby towns and listen to musicians play traditional music.

This cozy mystery's strength is in the setting. Fans of Christmas stories and anglophiles will enjoy the setting of the Welsh coast and the descriptions of Christmas traditions followed there.

*Dana Glauner  
South Piedmont Community College*



***Radical Sacrifice: The Rise and  
Ruin of Fitz John Porter***

William Marvel  
Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina  
Press, 2021. 472 pp., 16 illus., 7 maps,  
\$35.00, ISBN 978469661858.

George Templeton Strong, the great New York chronicler of the American Civil War, was puzzled by the fate of Fitz John Porter. "It seems incredible," Strong wrote in his diary, "that a military court composed of 'good men' had found Porter guilty of willfully disobeying orders and misconduct before the enemy." Trapped in a web of Radical Republican intrigue, Porter was court marshalled and blamed for the Union failures at Second Bull Run of John Pope and Irvin McDowell. Fighting until his death on May 21, 1900, Porter attempted to get a fair review of his case for the remainder of his life. He partially was successful in 1879 in obtaining an Army review, but Radical Republicans refused to allow him to return to a service rank.

William Marvel begins by telling the story of Porter's military career at West Point and in the war with Mexico. Well-liked and respected by his troops, Porter was a close favorite of George B. McClelland. Porter was not in favor of the Emancipation Proclamation, another fact that helped build a gulf between Porter and the Radical Republicans under Lincoln. The bulk of the book is devoted to Porter's downfall and his subsequent attempts to clear his name. By most accounts Porter performed "heroically and well" at Gaines's Mill and Malvern Hill, but in the end, he was saddled with the ultimate responsibility for the Union defeat at the Second Battle of Bull Run in 1862.

Needing a scapegoat, the Radical Republicans focused on Porter's performance and quickly he was relieved of

command, court marshalled and removed from the Army in January of 1863. Porter claimed that he had done the best he could and had an outstanding record in the service. What is interesting in this debate is the fact that most contemporary accounts, including Strong's, place the blame on Porter for the defeat. He may have been caught up in presidential politics to a degree, as he subsequently claimed, but he was found seriously lacking on the field at Bull Run by most accounts. Recent scholarship and review of the court martial record has revealed that the legal proceedings against Porter were "astoundingly corrupt" from a 21st century legal viewpoint. Thus, Porter's fate was sealed from the beginning and his conviction moved quickly to its final verdict. Legal niceties did not matter because most had decided that he was guilty before the proceedings had even started.

Marvel has researched the book well, including a 21st-century legal review of the court marshal. There are seven maps and sixteen illustrations in the book. While the cover of the book is very attractive, the bulk of the text plods monotonously, crammed into each and every page with as much type as can be borne. Overall a fair treatment of Porter, but lacks the conclusion most contemporaries held of him. This work is an excellent example of the conflict between truth and public perception of events.

*Ralph Scott*  
*East Carolina University*

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## Looking for help with collection development?

If you want to expand your library's collection of novels set in North Carolina, you should visit the Read North Carolina Novels blog hosted by the North Carolina Collection at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (<http://blogs.lib.unc.edu/ncnovels/>).

If your interest in North Caroliniana is more general, the North Carolina Collection at UNC-Chapel Hill regularly posts lists of new additions to their collection at this address: <http://blogs.lib.unc.edu/ncm/index.php/whats-new-in-the-north-carolina-collection/>.



Ralph Scott

## History Makers Digital Archive

**H**istory Makers ([www.thehistorymakers.org](http://www.thehistorymakers.org)) is a video African American oral history video collection available online. History Makers started interviewing in 2000 to collect the personal stories of living well known and little-known African Americans. Currently housing over 3000 memoirs in 10,000 hours of recordings, History Makers is a great source for anyone interested in the African American experience. The video oral histories range in length from 90 minutes to 15 hours. The collection is on deposit at the U.S. Library of Congress, and builds on earlier efforts by the library to collect Works Progress Administration (WPA) African-American narratives and voices. Individuals interviewed include persons from many fields: sports, religion, politics, medicine, music, media, law and sports.

The History Makers opening web page has several drop down menus that lead the viewer deeper into the web site: biographies, about, digital archives, education, events and programs, get involved, media and store. Digital archives give instructions and price information for access to History Makers. Education has K-12 classroom support, Higher Education fellowships and a link to a digital humanities sandbox. Events and programs contain videos of History Makers sponsored events (some on YouTube) and is a great way to sample History Makers offerings. Media give things like press kits and “special collections” of related materials from non-History Makers videos (Negro Baseball League for example). The store includes DVDs, tote bags and t-shirts.

A typical entry is that of the opera singer Jessye Norman. History Makers conducted two interviews with Norman on November 21, 2016, and April 27, 2017. The interviews were very well-done professional video productions. Her History Makers information page include a photograph of Norman and a biography of her life (she died in September of 2019 and this fact is noted in the write up). Interesting facts about the person being interviewed are also provided as a sort of human-interest tidbit. For Norman History Makers lists: favorite color (yellow), favorite food (smoked salmon), favorite time of the year (Fall), favorite song (God will take care of you), favorite vacation (anywhere there is an ocean), and favorite quote (“When people show you who they are, believe them”). Each History Makers entry contains a professional photograph of the individual. In addition to the biographies, there are short videos on interesting persons such as the oldest living Black cowboy, Vernon Jordan and Angela Davis.

Individual subscriptions to History Makers are \$30 a month (or \$300 a year). Institutions must subscribe at the institutional rate for which they will provide a quote. There is a special subset of scientist biographies funded by the NSF which are free, but users must register as a member to obtain access. Overall History Makers provides access to an internationally recognized collection of African-American oral histories.

## Open Educational Resources Initiatives among North Carolina's Community Colleges

In the early 2000's, the Open Educational Resources movement began with two separate but nearly simultaneous events: the launches of MIT's OpenCourseWare project and Creative Commons licenses.<sup>1</sup> The basic idea was to share materials as widely and freely as possible for the benefit of all.



The term "Open Educational Resource" was adopted by UNESCO at a forum on higher education in developing countries, but the most-cited definition comes from the Hewlett Foundation: Open Educational Resources (OER) as those that are "made freely and legally available on the Internet for anyone to reuse, revise, remix and redistribute."<sup>2</sup> Four of these R's (reuse, revise, remix, and redistribute) are often joined by a 5th: retain, to describe the permissions common to open educational resources that make them available for current use and flexible enough to accommodate future use.<sup>3</sup> These five R's are made explicit by the use of a license that builds on existing copyright laws. Creative Commons licenses are often used for this purpose.

As the name implies, the purpose of OER is to provide materials for teaching and learning. These materials can vary widely in type, from articles to books, from videos to software, or from ancillary materials like tests to whole courses. Research has shown that retention and student success are positively correlated with use of OER.<sup>4</sup> OER initiatives have grown quickly over the last decade, providing funding and training for resource creation and adoption. Sometimes OER materials and outreach are coordinated by statewide initiatives like Affordable Learning Georgia and OpenOregon, aimed primarily at colleges and universities. In our home state, NCLIVE had a program from 2018 to early 2020 called Open Education North Carolina with a two-pronged focus: one was to provide OER for some of the most-taught courses in NC's public and private colleges and universities, and the other was to encourage adoption through workshops and adoption grants to faculty members. Funding for Open Education North Carolina was provided by the Institute of Museum and Library Services.<sup>5</sup>

Other significant OER initiatives are funded by governmental and private funders, including the Hewlett Foundation and the Saylor Academy. One important current program is the US Department of Education's #GoOpen Initiative for K-12 schools. Our home state participates: the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction initiative called #GoOpenNC provides

1 "Open Educational Resources," Wikipedia, last modified June 21, 2021, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open\\_educational\\_resources](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Open_educational_resources).

2 "Open Educational Resources: Breaking the Lockbox on Education," William + Flora Hewlett Foundation, last modified November 26, 2013, <https://hewlett.org/open-educational-resources-breaking-the-lockbox-on-education/>.

3 Wiley, David, "Defining the 'Open' in Open Content and Open Educational Resources," OpenContent.org, <https://opencontent.org/definition/>.

4 See, for instance, Fischer, Lane, John Hilton, T. Jared Robinson, and David A. Wiley. "A Multi-Institutional Study of the Impact of Open Textbook Adoption on the Learning Outcomes of Post-Secondary Students." *Journal of Computing in Higher Education* 27, no. 3 (2015): 159-72. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12528-015-9101-x>.

5 "Open Education North Carolina," NCLIVE, <https://www.nclive.org/oenc>.

resources for teachers to implement in their local schools.<sup>6</sup> At the university level, various public and private schools have programs, such as North Carolina State University's Open Education initiative, and at the UNC System level there is a collaborative Educational Resources Affordability Committee.<sup>7</sup>

OER initiatives have thus gained traction across educational levels, from K-12 to universities. Occupying a critical position in that educational continuum are community colleges. One of the best known community college OER programs is from Tidewater Community College in Virginia, which in 2013 began offering the first "Z Degree" in the country. Z-Degree stands for "textbook-free" or zero textbook costs for students. After only four years, Tidewater was planning to launch additional Z Degrees not only to take advantage of student savings, but also because of gains in student retention and higher grades.<sup>8</sup>



But did you know that North Carolina's community colleges are tackling OER too? One of the best places to start exploring NCCC's OER initiatives is openNCCC, which is available online at <https://opennccc.nccommunitycolleges.edu/>. OpenNCCC builds on more than a decade of shared resources, which began in 2007 with a learning object repository to share resources among the 58 community colleges and grew into the North Carolina Learning Object Repository (NCLOR). Content from NCLOR was migrated to openNCCC in 2020, and additional content has been added. OpenNCCC's platform was created by OER advocate ISKME, which provides OER services, most notably the platform for OER Commons. An initiative originating at the System Office, openNCCC's

purpose is "to offer a comprehensive infrastructure that provides high-quality OER content and the opportunity for collaboration around the adaptation, evaluation, and instructional needs of faculty and learners."<sup>9</sup> OpenNCCC currently contains more than 12,500 OER across all subject areas that faculty members are encouraged to use. The materials in openNCCC include syllabi, modules, and whole courses, as well as readings, case studies, assignments, and textbooks. In addition to these resources, openNCCC contains video tutorials on integrating content to the Learning Management System and authoring or remixing OER.

In addition to openNCCC, the North Carolina Community College Library Association (NCCLA) has also foregrounded open educational resources in professional development for members. The NCCLA Open Educational Resources Task Force was created in the spring of 2021 in the wake of a successful OER program during the NCCLA annual conference.<sup>10</sup> Members of the Task Force are concentrating first on developing a sense of community in order to foster programs that all schools can build on. Another early goal of co-chairs Julie Reed and Garrison Libby is to create a guidebook or set of best practices that fellow librarians can turn to, in addition to having an identified community of practitioners who could offer advice.



The Task Force members draw inspiration from each other and their colleagues as well as successful statewide programs like those in California, Oregon, and Colorado.<sup>11</sup> Across our state, there are a variety of programs at individual community colleges that could serve as models. Among

<sup>6</sup> "#GoOpenNC," North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, <https://sites.google.com/dpi.nc.gov/goopennc/>.

<sup>7</sup> "Open Education," NC State University Libraries, <https://www.lib.ncsu.edu/do/open-education>; OER Initiatives; UNC University Library Advisory Council, "Committees," ULAC, last modified June 11, 2021, <https://libguides.ecu.edu/c.php?g=671775&p=4730382>.

<sup>8</sup> TCC Today, "Z-Degree adds up to \$1 million in savings plus student retention and better grades," Tidewater Community College, last modified October 3, 2017, <https://news.tcc.edu/z-degree-reaches-one-million-savings/>.

<sup>9</sup> "About OpenNCCC," openNCCC, <https://opennccc.nccommunitycolleges.edu/about>.

<sup>10</sup> "NCCCLA Conference 2021," North Carolina Community College Library Association, <https://ncccla.org/conferences/conference2021/>; Davis, Angela, "NCCCLA OER Task Force," NCCCLA, April 29, 2021, <https://ncccla.org/2021/04/29/ncccla-oer-task-force/>.

<sup>11</sup> California Virtual Campus, "Open Educational Resources," California Community Colleges, <https://cvc.edu/open-educational-resources/>; "OpenOregon Educational Resources," OpenOregon, <https://openoregon.org/>; CCCOnline, "Colorado OER Council," Colorado Department of Higher Education, <http://masterplan.highered.colorado.gov/oer-in-colorado/>.

them are online faculty development courses such as those offered at Wake Tech, or the OER Course Development grants offered by Central Carolina Community College.<sup>12</sup> Another success story comes from Central Piedmont Community College, where English 112 courses fully utilize OER, and Biology 110 and 111 are actively integrating OER.

Most recently, NCCCLA hosted an OER Panel Discussion on July 8, 2021, with panelists Samantha O'Connor (Central Carolina), Julie Reed (Central Piedmont), Liza Palmer (Brunswick), and Stephen Brooks (Durham Tech), with moderator Garrison Libby (Central Piedmont). The panelists discussed OER experiences at their institutions, including the strategies they employed working with departmental faculty to adopt and use OER in their classes. Panelists and attendees shared some of the challenges community college faculty and librarians face when considering Open Educational Resources. Among them are the fact that many courses are taught by adjunct faculty who are pulled in many directions, so having a “plug and play” solution like commercial textbook companies offer is a powerful attractant. Many of the currently-available OER do not yet have ancillary materials like slides, homework,

or quizzes, and developing them or finding alternatives is time-consuming. Another issue that continues to linger for some faculty members is a concern over quality, despite increasing research and the availability of reviews of OER such as the ones available on Open Textbook Library. Librarians are trying to work with faculty members to address these issues by identifying high quality materials they can use, or encouraging them to create new materials that can aid other faculty members in their discipline.

For community college students, textbook costs are not an abstract problem. Julie Reed recalled a time recently when she attended a Student Government Association meeting and asked who there had chosen not to buy a textbook before. All hands went up. There are some times when students have to choose between buying groceries and buying the required books for their classes. There are some times when the textbook cost is higher than the cost of taking the class. Ultimately, these are solvable problems, and Open Educational Resources are part of the solution. As partners with students and with faculty, librarians are also part of the solution.

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<sup>12</sup> eLearning Support and Instructional Design, “Online Faculty Development,” Wake Tech, <https://waketech.edu/elsid/faculty-development>; Center for Academic Excellence, “OER Course Development Opportunities,” Central Carolina Community College, <https://www.cccc.edu/teaching-learning/awards/course-development-oer/>.





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