

# The New York State Library IMLS funded project, *Making It REAL!* Recruitment, Education, and Learning: Creating A New Generation of Librarians

## The Teaching Library Model: A Report

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### Introduction

In July 2004, the Institute for Museum and Library Services [IMLS] awarded \$995,630 for the New York State Library proposal, *Making It REAL! Recruitment, Education, and Learning: Creating A New Generation of Librarians*, so as to launch the first statewide multi-partner recruitment and education of librarians to represent and serve the shifting demographics defining 21st century New York. Cooperating with the New York State Library (NYSL) in this innovative endeavor were twelve library systems, six public and private University library schools, and the New York Library Association. At the conclusion of the three-year program, forty-one scholarship recipients and graduate librarians representing the diversity of New York State entered the profession to serve the diverse communities throughout the state. Recruitment and retention best practices were shared at statewide professional meetings and through an ongoing informational website, [www.librarycareersny.org](http://www.librarycareersny.org). The training and education of the scholarship students reflected the commitment of all the partners to a new form of collaboration between the practice of librarianship in the field and the pedagogy of the discipline in the graduate programs. This commitment energized the realization of a new paradigm for librarian recruitment, education, and training in New York State: the *Teaching Library* model. Complete information can be found at the project's website at: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/imls/index.html>

## I. Background: New York State Library Systems

In order to implement such an ambitious program, the New York State Library capitalized on the existing infrastructure of library systems that had long-term effective relationships with their member libraries. The System structure in New York State is multi-faceted. It links over 4,000 local school libraries to 41 regional school library systems; the eleven hundred public and association library buildings are members of twenty- three cooperative or consolidated public library systems; the nine regional resource councils serve as the umbrella systems for special and academic libraries, and include the school and public library systems. Representing the different types of libraries ranging across all of New York State, these systems optimize services, regardless of library location and size. The interconnectedness of this System paradigm facilitates not only economies of scale for services such as interlibrary loan, but also shared experiences and best practices in management, budgets, personnel, and training issues.

The twelve library Systems as principal Teaching Libraries involved with the ***Making It REAL!*** Phase I project were responsible for selecting and overseeing the local *Teaching Libraries* which helped to recruit the scholarship students, providing a meaningful employment experience, and mentoring them in the process. Ongoing information exchange with the participating library schools was a goal. The reciprocity of communication between the New York State Library and the library systems, and those systems with their member libraries, was an essential ingredient in the success of the project. The New York State library systems had the organizational structure in place for the implementation of this complex and innovative effort, especially for the creation of the *Teaching Library* model.

## II. The *Teaching Library* Model

The *Teaching Library* concept at the core of the NYSL IMLS funded project, ***Making It REAL!*** Phase I is to change the geography MLS students experience on their way to a career in librarianship. Planning for recruitment to meet diversity service needs, placement in positions that generate positive learning experiences, ongoing mentoring to ensure professional growth, and utilization of existing networks of opportunity among Systems and library schools are only some of the aims of the *Teaching Library* model. The stated intention for the *Teaching Library* in the New York State Library grant proposal is to be a model “that will provide best practices that can be replicated by library systems, library schools, and library organizations . . . to help libraries and library schools build strong partnerships and develop new means of collaboration.” The rationale for the collaboration is the intention to create a new generation of diverse librarians, who would emerge from library school already initiated to the pragmatic needs of libraries.

In execution, the *Teaching Library* as evidenced in the ***Making It REAL!*** Phase I project is

among the more complex ideas to realize in library education. Complicating its implementation are two entrenched phenomena: 1. the decades long disconnect between the theoretical and pedagogical approaches in the university environment leading to the professional degree in library science; and, 2. the practical service demands of many types of libraries in demographically distinct environments. This resistance to change includes the human agents guiding the realization of the Teaching Library, the existing governance structure of partnering institutions, and the assumptions and mis-readings in any dynamically evolving definition and objective. The *Teaching Library* model invites detours and facilitates risk-taking and challenges preconceptions on what it is to be a librarian serving diverse communities in the twenty-first century.

### III. The *Teaching Library* as Case Study

The NYSL *Making It REAL!* Phase I project is a case study in what works, could work, or does not work in the effort to effect a *Teaching Library* ideal within the partnering library systems and their member libraries in the recruitment, education, and training of a new and diverse cadre of librarians.

This report summarizes and places in context the formal and informal evaluations and observations gathered over the three years of the *Making It REAL!* project. It draws especially on the grant evaluator's findings which have aggregated all of the primary materials gathered in conjunction with the final program evaluation. Since establishing best practices and determining replicable models for effective library education was an objective, this report will highlight select examples.

The intention of this report is not only to describe specific *Teaching Library* experiences within the larger program of recruiting, educating, and training future librarians representing diverse constituencies of New York State, but it is also to demonstrate that any effort at change in entrenched graduate educational systems is challenging, fraught with pitfalls, but worth the energy expended.

Innovative projects almost by definition will evidence strengths and weaknesses. Sharing the experience is an opportunity for the profession to reflect on what else is needed, how to achieve latent opportunities, and to begin an ongoing conversation on that process. As evidenced at the New York Library Association [NYLA] conferences and during evaluation interviews concerning *Making It REAL!* that conversation within the profession is key and it has begun.

This report will also give an overview of the people and places involved in the *Teaching Library* aspect of the *Making It REAL!* project. It is premised on the observation that libraries, their related structures, and the people managing them are experiencing a

considerable amount of institutional redirecting. They are trying to keep their options open on mission and objectives, and are testing alternatives so as to adapt quickly and effectively to shifting service needs. Assuming the *Teaching Library* model has value in the education of librarians for service to diverse constituencies, the lessons learned need to be acted on rather than archived. Though reshaping some aspects of the model may be necessary, foreclosing further development of the *Teaching Library* model is not recommended. The potential for a Phase II project would provide opportunity for any requisite adjustments.

#### **IV. The *Teaching Library*: Problems and Possibilities**

When the New York State Library submitted its grant request to IMLS for the *Making It REAL!* project, it proposed a challenging initiative of partnerships that would meet a perceived need for diverse librarians to serve diverse populations around the state. The proposed partnership recognized the essential role that the graduate library schools in New York State needed to play in implementing the project. The graduate schools held the degree granting power in New York, though not exclusively as the project planners were to learn. Distance education was also a player.

At the same time, the New York State Library leaders were aware through communications with the 73 library systems across the state that library services were inadequately staffed, especially in relation to emerging new population needs. The hundreds of local community and school libraries within these Systems were also ideal venues for practical library service experience for the scholarship student. The common link among these entities was the professional organization for all librarians in the state, that is the New York Library Association [NYLA]. The shape of the project's partnerships emerged from these understandings.

Potential partners were invited to participate. Six of the seven library schools in New York State, all ALA accredited, accepted the invitation, as did thirteen library systems. NYLA was invited to participate and the New York State Library maintained the role as managing partner. The library schools had considerable autonomy in implementing their component of the project, which in all cases was an extension of their existing mission. To a great extent, the same was true with NYLA, which enhanced its continuing education activities and provided forums as opportunities to disseminate results of *Making It REAL!*

The partnering library systems were in mostly uncharted waters and challenged by their designation as Teaching Libraries. The project design of *Making It REAL!* expected the graduate library program personnel and faculty in the universities to link with the administrators of the library systems who, in turn, connected with the local library staff where the scholarship student was working. The complexity and compartmentalization of the partnering institutions mitigated against optimizing the anticipated dialogue and communication. The rigidity of traditional structures did not yield easily to alternative

approaches. However, the partnering did contribute to better recruitment and encouraged approaches to mentoring that might not have been tried otherwise.

The autonomous governance of the teaching libraries within the collaborating systems, supported individual interpretations as a *Teaching Library* rather than any standardized model. This encouraged idiosyncratic approaches rather than synchronization among the partners. The goal as set out in the grant proposal reads:

Together the library schools and the library systems will create a plan tailored to provide a rich educational experience, including academic content, the practical experience, and the mentoring needed for the student to succeed in the available career position.”

Deviations from this ambitious goal were the norm as its implementation had never been tested in New York State. “Together” had never been an operative concept, or even a pragmatically realizable goal, among the graduate library schools and the library systems. What was already in place, for instance, tended to remain in place without much if any adaptation to the above stated goal. The ‘disconnect’ was deeply entrenched in the culture of the library profession. Due to state certification requirements, any practicum tended to be specific to the library school and not necessarily established at the library site. As a library degree prerequisite, no essential reciprocity of design and decision-making in the practicum needed to be elicited from the participating library nor was there any evidence that such was ever done. Interestingly, that is starting to happen since the terminus of the ***Making It REAL!*** project, testifying to the fact of residual meritorious consequences derived from the experience of the Teaching Library after its experimental stage. Likewise, the ongoing sharing of ***Making It REAL!*** project information via the NYSL project website and conference programs is promoting change that is not immediately obvious or measurable.

While the partnering systems recognized and reported on the shortage of librarians in their regions, generating interest in the career of librarianship had been tangential to their organization goals. Recruiting for the profession, especially with the added requirement of “diversity,” stymied many. It was not until the NYSL elaborated on the accepted definition, which adhered to that of the American Library Association, that the *Teaching Library* partners involved in recruiting expanded their understanding for inclusiveness.

“The American Library Association recognizes that in addition to race, creed, color, religion, gender, disability and national origin, there are a multitude of differences (language origin, regional and geographic background, economic class, education, learning and communication styles, sexual orientation and personal lifestyle) that individuals bring to the workplace.”

Though clarifying the definition of “diversity” helped refine the recruitment objectives, for the most part, the designated *Teaching Libraries* had already selected candidates and could not retrospectively revise the process. Consultation with the admissions officers of the graduate university programs might have provided helpful selection criteria for candidates. It was a missed opportunity for collaboration that might have benefited from more communication regarding pre-established guidelines.

The library system partners had little or no experience working with the university based graduate library schools in recruitment and, where a relationship existed, it was mostly accidental or specific to an individual who traversed both career worlds. For instance, an upstate *Teaching Library* system had a faculty member from the Syracuse University School of Information on its board of trustees and this individual rendered consultative advice for the scholarship student selection process. This advantageous relationship was diminished by reports from the *Teaching Libraries* mentioning Syracuse University most often as the graduate library school least involved with the active process of implementing the collaborative component of the project. On the other hand, the University reported little if any initiative from the System side of the equation.

In retrospect, what was needed among all the partners participating in the *Teaching Library* model was structured coordination among them and a commitment to cooperation in the educating of the *Making It REAL!* scholarship student. Needed to help that process along were guidelines and work plans for implementation. The fact that all of the partners had developed Outcome Based Evaluation [OBE] plans was not helpful enough to facilitate that process which, with a few exceptions, lacked preliminary planning collaboration among the partners. In a case such as the partnering relationship between the Onondaga Library System and Syracuse University, the director of the MLS program met early with the assistant director at the library system in the process of developing the System’s grant proposal. The two administrators shared an understanding of the objectives of the project and were committed to its success.

The need for guidance and direction remained unabated throughout *Making It REAL!* A *Teaching Library* model developed by a library school academic while consulting on the project with the project evaluator has considerable potential as a workable paradigm. The evaluator’s model took into consideration the principals in this process: students, librarians, and library school faculty and the expected reciprocity in their relationships, both what was traditional in internships and mentoring and what was innovative. In order to facilitate evaluation of these relationships in action, a three-fold loop approach was introduced. These “loops” are essentially communication designs:

- Loop One: the practical—the scholarship student in relationship to the *Teaching Library* and the *Teaching Library* in relationship to the student;
- Loop Two: the teaching principles of librarianship: the scholarship student in relationship to the library school and the library school to the student;

- Loop Three: the collaboration: how the *Teaching Library* connects with the university library school, and how their faculty and administrators interact with the *Teaching Library*.

This theoretical model evolved after the first year of evaluative interviews which determined that considerable confusion about the *Teaching Library* model existed among the players as to the expectations of the ***Making It REAL!*** grant designers. Though it was not retroactively applied to the way *Teaching Libraries* conducted their part of the project, it did set in place guidelines that spoke to a more ideal realization. The evaluator's *Teaching Library* tool also demonstrated a function of the project evaluation which was implicit from the beginning: the evaluation itself would also function as an opportunity to articulate what was less explicitly stated yet potentially useful to others.

Posting this information on the website and sharing it at state and national conferences served to translate the *Teaching Library* concept into a more manageable and executable model. At the same time, the majority of the partnering library systems and their participating members remained in adaptive mode as *Teaching Libraries* throughout most of the ***Making It REAL!*** project. Despite some initial confusion, the library systems and their *Teaching Libraries* succeeded in their efforts. Forty-one new graduate librarians were newly qualified to serve the diverse community needs of New York State and elsewhere. Sharing their experiences is a roadmap for the future.

## V. The *Teaching Library*: Role of Geography

The population and geography of New York State influences the decision for establishing a community library of a particular size and service. The same is applicable to the designation of other types of libraries, given the specificity of their individual missions. To facilitate the services of the many community, school, university and special libraries, New York State instituted the library system structure in order to expedite those services cooperatively. This System structure formed the scaffolding for realizing the ***Making It REAL!*** *Teaching Library* objective. The New York State Library [NYSL] as managing partner did not have to minister to multiple individual libraries. Rather NYSL worked with the Systems who, in turn, designated members as *Teaching Libraries*, at times in direct cooperation with the System because of the placement of the scholarship student. The Systems had years of experience in implementing various projects with their member libraries, and, though local governance dictated site protocols, the System had considerable influence. Each ***Making It REAL!*** contact person at a System was familiar with the social and demographic milieu of its member libraries and best able to determine needs in placing a scholarship student at a library designated as a *Teaching Library*.

What needs to be understood for the working of the grant project is that the System named a *Teaching Library* in its statewide partner relationship was not only responsible for its version

of OBE and fiscal administration, but also responsible for naming a member library a *Teaching Library*. For the most part, the System partner could not execute any employer/employee relationship with the local *Teaching Library* but it was at that site that the script for ***Making It REAL!*** needed to be realized. A complication to this paradigm was the option granted for scholarship students in remote areas to register for an online graduate library school program. Aside from those enrolled in the Syracuse University distance-learning program which was a seamless partner with its site-specific classes, all of the other online library degree programs where scholarship students enrolled were outside of New York State. None of these out of state graduate library programs were contractual partners to the ***Making It REAL!*** project.

In retrospect, it might have been possible to transcend geographic boundaries for partnerships, but the logistics prohibited doing such after the project was underway. What became evident was the role geography played in choice of graduate library schools. The scholarship students tended to cluster in programs proximate to their work and residence sites, regardless of the special fields they were interested in pursuing. Those who were not near any graduate library school chose the online approach with Clarion University, the University of North Texas, and Southern Connecticut University.

The mileage distances and dispersed regions of the ***Making It REAL!*** partner sites illustrate the challenges in implementing any collaborative project among all these disparate institutions. The dependence of the multiple partners on electronic connections does not address the existential, the need for personal interaction necessary for the more nuanced decision-making and customizing of the program for different locales. The ***Making It REAL!*** grant assumed that the *Teaching Library* and University partners would be in communication with one another concerning the students and the effort to create new models for *Teaching Libraries*, an assumption only partially realized. Most of that communication was about expediting fiscal issues. Where there had been opportunities for developing working partner relationships, such as an initial statewide workshop for all partners or scheduled professional conferences, time constraints and other commitments precluded focusing on the *Teaching Library* partnering needs beyond the fiscal purpose of the meeting.

The extent of the challenges in forging new relationships between the *Teaching Library* and University partners in order to create a new paradigm for educating librarians was severely underestimated. The evaluation that was ongoing throughout the project recorded the weaknesses and disconnects in fulfilling partnership goals, especially where the *Teaching Library* model was concerned, but did not recommend intervention. Interceding would have been labeled as interference and no project mediator was on board to catalyze change. The advantages of shared strengths and weaknesses discovered in the process would have served to facilitate ongoing adjustments. That opportunity was missed.

Though there were some attempts at scholarship student exchange between urban library experiences and more rural experiences, as a practical consideration, distances and differences

among libraries thwarted any systematic attempt at this ideal. Just as there are traditional separations between the university library schools and library systems/local libraries, so also is there a dichotomy between the urban and rural, the “downstate and upstate.” NYLA, which hypothetically might have been in a position to bridge this gap, was limited by its own history of attracting membership from the school and public libraries more than from the library schools. Where a NYLA conference was held was often a determinant of who would attend with the “downstate” libraries less inclined to venture to the northwest corner of the state when the conference was held in Buffalo.

## VI. The *Teaching Library*: Persons and Leadership

Distinct groupings of persons constituted the implementers for the *Making It REAL!* project. At the time, none was chosen specifically because they had demonstrated qualities of leadership that would facilitate the realization of the project. Assumptions were made about persons in management positions, some realized and some not. Though one partner commented on the role that internal stakeholders would also play, the issue was lost in implementation. Local staff and boards were to play a part that was not predictable. However, when the board decisions were proactive in favor of the purpose of the project, they rendered good results. An example was the board of a small upstate library in a bustling small town whose dominant industry is tourism. When the director of the library was named a scholarship student for the *Making It REAL!* project, the board granted up to 25% time flexibility. This endorsed the OBE plan submitted by the Clinton-Essex Franklin Library System which recommended such time allowance. It also demonstrated the local board’s acknowledgement of the System as a *Teaching Library* and the local board’s commitment to the success of the candidate.

The practical concerns of the *Making It REAL!* project required that existing leadership constitute the local fiscal agents responsible for the awarding of the scholarships and the administrators for the fulfillment of the *Teaching Library* grant requirements. Five “communities” of persons were directly involved in the partnership aspect of the *Teaching Library*: 1. Management and advisors of the NYSL; 2. Deans of the university library schools and admission officers; 3. Executive directors of the systems; 4. Directors of the local teaching libraries; 5. Scholarship students.

The leadership from the New York State Library was experienced in grant management, especially in the detailed requirements of Outcome Based Evaluation which was an integral component of the grant down to the local level. The NYSL dispersal of monies to the *Teaching Library* partners and the university library schools was bound by internal regulations within the New York State Education Department Office of Fiscal Management. Snafus in this process, despite the best intention of NYSL management, thwarted the smooth start-up of the grant process for the partners. This fueled an ever-ready criticism of the state bureaucracy. The result was that, at least in the early stages of implementing the project,

NYSL management had to devote time to fiscal matters, rather than advancing the less tangible goals of *Teaching Library*.

The state leadership had in place methods for communicating across the state with all the partners, some through structured meetings at library centers or conference events, others through telephone and email, most via an effective, long-standing statewide listserv. On the suggestion from the evaluators, NYSL management established a Yahoo Group customized for the grant partners but the service was underutilized. The flexibility to keep adapting quickly when something did not work as expected is not a strength of the institutions involved with the project. Given that difficulty, NYSL management exhibited keen leadership ability in keeping the *Making It REAL!* grant on track for its main goal of educating a new generation of librarians to meet the needs of New York State libraries.

Before the project was articulated for an IMLS grant, the deans of the New York university library schools (though not their admissions officers) had been invited by the New York State Librarian to a meeting in New York City. This was the first meeting of this type for NYSL and the deans. The aim of the meeting was to discuss library education, future needs of the state, and where the library schools were in this long-range planning. The value of this meeting extended beyond the single event as it established the fact of NYSL's interest and the personal concern of the State Librarian for the education of librarians. When the grant was awarded, NYSL held "evaluation workshops" in early June of 2005 for all partners to meet and interact with one another and work directly with the grant evaluator. Not all of the Teaching Library [10 of 12] or University [5 of 6] partners attended, yet a synergy seemed underway. This opportunity remained a highlight for the partners who identified themselves as mutual stakeholders in the success of the project.

All higher education today, evidenced by the budgets for marketing and the concern for rankings, is competitive among the specialized degree programs of any given institution. This is especially manifest among the university library schools of New York State collaborating with the *Making It REAL!* project. Four of the six are private institutions where the library education program survives only if self-sustaining. The two public funded universities, SUNY Albany and SUNY Buffalo, struggle for funding midst expanding missions that are re-defining the role of "information science" in public education. Late in the *Making It REAL!* project, the SUNY Buffalo program underwent a restructuring of its organization as a department of library and information studies.

Any disinclination towards sharing among the individual deans in these schools is understandable as is the tradition of maintaining any exclusivity over research and programs until published in referred journals. On the other hand, if the dean or another administrator had an already established relationship with a *Teaching Library* that facilitated the evaluator's "Loop Three" module, teaching library-library school-teaching library, then that was advantageous for the student even when it was not perfectly enacted. This tended to work best when the library school had an already established relationship with a library system which

was now designated a *Teaching Library*. The relationships were usually not multi-faceted or inclusive of other collaborators. Communication with the universities and the *Teaching Libraries* usually devolved onto the dean and, as stated earlier, personal relationships mattered. In the case of one University, the program director nurtured the relationship with the *Teaching Library* which continued a tradition of employing graduates of the program. Inquiries as to the progress of scholarship students in the ***Making It REAL!*** Project became an informal part of that process even though it did not occur in a structured pre-determined manner.

The executive directors of the library systems, regardless of type, have strong professional organizations in New York State where they meet regularly and share emerging problems and issues challenging their Systems. These organizations provide an opportunity for the more rural systems in the upstate region to dialogue with the large urban ones in the New York boroughs. An already established relationship between the Capitol Region BOCES School Library System Director and her counterpart with the Franklin-Essex Hamilton BOCES helped them decide to create a common OBE plan for the two systems and this proved valuable to both in the collaboration. As the implementation of the project unfolded, this collegueship proved advantageous in addressing unanticipated challenges.

All of the *Teaching Libraries* dealt differently with the recruitment of scholarship students and with the execution of an educational work environment that correlated well with the graduate library academic program. The local *Teaching Libraries* were directly responsible for the scholarship students, for their selection, work assignments, mentoring, and for ongoing communication with their Systems, the lead *Teaching Library*. In a significant number of cases, the *Teaching Libraries* at the local level or the System *Teaching Library* reached out for candidates within the ranks of their own paraprofessional or administrative staffs. This worked well in such partners as the Queens Public Library System, which had a developed program of internal recruiting that utilized existing communication modes within the organization: flyers/handouts, the organization's e-mail listserv and staff meeting announcements. Queens presented further insight into the value of established networks, especially when it came to the "teaching library-library school-teaching library loop." Through the Queens Borough Public Library, scholarship students attended the Queens College, CUNY graduate library program. The fact of a pre-existing relationship between the two institutions helped, especially with the student-mentoring component. Some of the staff of the library system worked as adjunct faculty at the library school and served on advisory councils at the university, and the university faculty maintained active relationship with the library system so as to place graduates of the program in professional career lines. As another *Teaching Library* manager from upstate noted, serving as an adjunct in the university's graduate library program was the most effective way of advancing these relationships on behalf of new recruits to the profession.

Another successful mentoring approach occurred at the New York Public Library's Science, Industry and Business Library [SIBL] where planned mentorship was provided for the

student. From the beginning, the student was assigned a formal mentor; met with the Head of Information Services on a regular basis; and reported to the SIBL Director about once a month. In addition, she obtained informal mentoring from two of SIBL's experienced reference librarians.

The scholarship students are the rationale for the *Making It REAL!* project. With them, the project has a future, placing 41 new librarians serving the many diverse communities. Their selection, their experience in library school and with the *Teaching Library*, and their achieving the goal of a graduate library degree framed their role in realizing the objectives of the *Teaching Library* model. For example, the program at the Capital Region Boces School Library System recruited scholarship students through advertisements in the community via print and electronic formats. Their selection process was structured as a committee consisting of two school administrators, a school library media specialist (all members of the school library council) and the BOCES Director as a non-voting, ex-officio member. It was the interaction and exchange among these persons that enhanced the recruitment process. The Boces Director reached out to the Dean of the University at Albany on best candidate qualities and how to find potential school media librarians, especially among diverse communities. Though the Capital District BOCES Director thought the candidate pool was small—six female candidates, two of whom were ethnic minorities—the District did choose a candidate who met all the criteria: an African American woman who was a credentialed science teacher in the local schools. After the scholarship student was selected and her program was underway, the *Teaching Library* guided the student practicum to a suburban elementary school and to an urban at-risk school where mentoring was readily established. The Director at the *Teaching Library* took the initiative to speak with the library school dean and clarify the requirements for an internship and to assure that that the placement was optimal, especially for mentoring.

When Best Practices are aggregated, it is clear that those *Teaching Libraries* that either had a viable candidate already working as a paraprofessional or in other capacity and those who described and advertised specific qualifications for the scholarship, including a structured selection process by qualified professionals, were most successful in implementing their objectives. Consultation with the intended library school was key as was tracking what occurred at the local *Teaching Library*. Initiative and leadership were indispensable for effective implementation.

## VII. The *Teaching Library* Model: Conclusion

The innovative initiative of the *Teaching Library* that was key to the realization of the *Making It REAL!* Project goals needs to be accepted as a work in progress. Many lessons were learned in the process of implementation which have been documented in the extensive reports of the grant evaluator. Only in a few places was the traditional disconnect between library schools and pragmatic needs of the field addressed. Where it was, something new and valuable occurred. The director of the *Making It REAL!* project at Onondaga County Public

Library [OCPL,] remarked that it comes down to individuals and institutions, and where individuals across the institutions know each other and have worked together previously, then any accepted initiative has a better chance. She made two of the more concrete suggestions, not stated explicitly in the evaluator's reports: 1. Co-teaching in the graduate library programs with practioners and academics sharing course planning, and 2. Including university library school faculty on boards and committees of local libraries and System and Council boards. Reflecting on why the *Teaching Library* worked very effectively at the Southeastern New York Library Resource Council, the Executive Director, summarized the experience:

- A candidate was chosen whose strengths complimented needs of the Council. The candidate expressed a strong interest in the profession of librarianship. The candidate worked as a paraprofessional in the organization. The Council started planning this selection process as soon as the grant was announced and before it was awarded.
- A practical project was designed for the candidate that had a lot of meaning for the libraries participating as well as for the candidate. It benefited the organization as well as the candidate.
- Collaboration among all participating was established from the beginning and the project was developed as a team. Everyone had a stake in the success of the project.
- Throughout the tenure of the project, the Council management worked closely with the library school candidate chosen and also with the *Teaching Library*. The candidate was provided with supervision and guidance for the process.
- As the sponsoring organization, there was a commitment to both the process and the end result. Participants became involved in the organizational goals for the project. The candidate was exposed to the workings of that process.

Though it might have to be adapted locally, this library system's analysis of its role serves as a guideline for successful future implementation of the *Teaching Library* in other venues.

As an innovative initiative of the New York State Library, the *Teaching Library* model benefits from the input and recommendations of those involved in Phase I of implementing the design. The strength of the model derives from reflective experiences on what was most effective and what needs adjusting. For instance, any future endeavors will have the advantage of guidelines before starting the recruitment process. The problems that occurred over the concept of "diversity" have been resolved but any recommendations will suggest a more inclusive approach that addresses the demographics of a region and community diversity. The availability of scholarships was well marketed but with better planning-time can be more effective and recruit a greater pool of eligible candidates. The experience of Phase I has led many library systems to a heightened awareness of the need for a diverse new generation of librarians, but also to a recognition of talent in their midst. The possibility of a library school scholarship is also an incentive for library workers to remain in the field. Retention of newly recruited librarians in the program is seen as an important goal.

The program's managers recognize that mentoring of scholarship students in the work environment needs to be structured and flexible at the same time. The mentoring aspect of the project needs to adjust to the practical circumstances of the student's graduate university program, the professional development duties specific to the local *Teaching Library*, and the reality of geographic challenges and domestic responsibilities defining the student's everyday life. At the same time, the *Teaching Library* administrators need to train library personnel who will be involved in the mentoring of the importance of this function and the most proven methods for effective results. Cooperation with continuing education programs for mentoring and certification in such is possible through library professional organizations and needs to be taken advantage of when available.

Collaboration between the *Teaching Library* and the graduate library program works best when there are existing connections between a *Teaching Library* system and the university. Accepting the fact of peripheral involvement is less desirable and can be remedied by a more proactive approach to including the university representatives in the process, such as with the recruitment aspect. Advisor relationships exist informally but can be formalized if seen as a value. Available career opportunities among the *Teaching Libraries* can be made known to the graduate library programs and the interdependent roles emphasized. The "disconnect" between graduate library programs and the practical field of librarianship is gradually eroding as a more conscious and deliberate conversation on cooperation gets underway. The ***Making It REAL!*** Phase I is catalyzing this phenomenon.

One of the main advantages of Phase I is that details on all aspects of the project are available for perusal and discussion via posting on the New York State Library ***Making It REAL!*** website. (Website can be seen at: <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/imls/index.html>) A mechanism for career planning and development is in place and can be enhanced with a communication method among the participating library systems and *Teaching Libraries*. An acceptance of the *process* of achieving results and objectives and the ongoing nature of this *process* is a dynamic opportunity built into the ***Making It REAL!*** *Teaching Library* model.

Compiling of best practices and attentive customizing of the model to meet specific geographic and institutional needs can provide the foundation for future advancement of the New York State *Teaching Library* model in a Phase II of ***Making It REAL! Recruitment, Education, and Learning: Creating A New Generation of Librarians.***

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