HOW FINDING YOUR QUESTION AND FOLLOWING YOUR CURIOSITY CAN NATURALLY CRAFT YOUR RESEARCH IDENTITY

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Our journey for this session

Librarian researchers and identity → **Stories into librarianship** → **Questions and research journeys** → **Friendly advise**

Note: there will a few times for you to reflect on your experiences, and share with a partner

LIBRARIAN RESEARCHERS AND IDENTITY

Holistic view

A lot of competition for your time and attention at work, at home, and other areas of your life

When you have a better grasp on who you are as a librarian researcher, you feel more confident

Doing projects you are genuinely interested in will help you stay focused, motivated, and satisfied

Able to express more clearly to others what you do

Why having a research identity is important

This is such a big topic to discuss and can take a lot of time to reflect on

A number of identities that we aren't talking about today, just as important, but our time is limited

How to discover or re-discover your research identity

◦ Often a long process

◦ Time to yourself

◦ Time talking with others

◦ Can tie into parts of your non-professional life, and previous careers

◦ We aren't trying to make a planned out itinerary of our research journey

  ◦ But rather getting a lay land and general direction
  ◦ True for newer and seasoned librarian researchers

Some clarity of terms

Librarian researcher

- A librarian who does research
- This is the term we'll be using

Librarian scholar

- Librarians who have expertise in a field outside of library and information science and balance their scholarship between the two disciplines
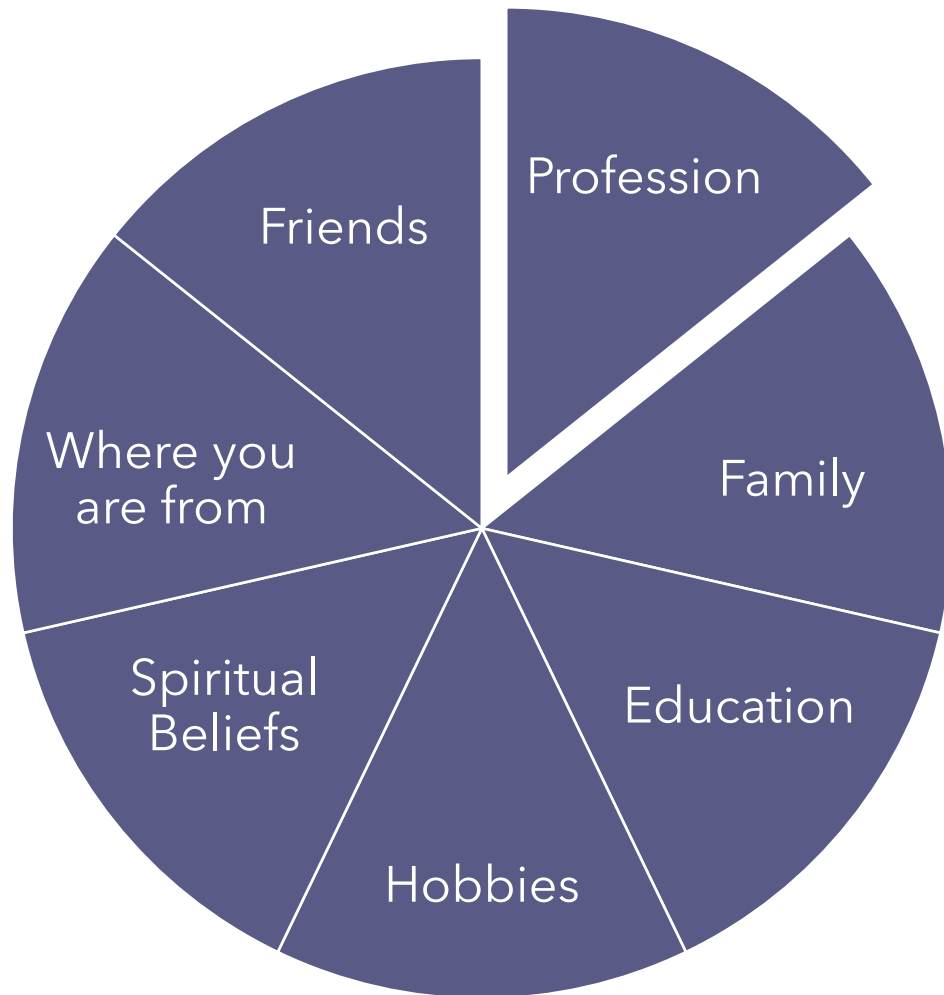- Often they have advanced degrees in these other fields

Practitioner-researcher

- Those who research their practice
- Even to just do your job better by 'looking into things', even if they aren't publications or presentations

As a librarian and as a researcher

◦ Academic librarians are a traditionally supportive role

- ◦ Think reference desk – we are here to help you

◦ There are some who feel this role should be more akin to faculty, as peers in the research community, not just as support to the research community

- ◦ There's been studies on how librarians feel about this and what it can look like
  - ◦ Eg. Be a full member of a research team and doing research together

◦ In some of those interviews, as much as the participants wanted to move away from the primarily supportive role to a more similar to faculty, they still often feel like if someone asks for assistance, they need prioritize this over their research

- ◦ Even when there were dedicated days or hours for doing research

◦ Finding time and a mental space for both our own research and assisting others with their research, requires a balance
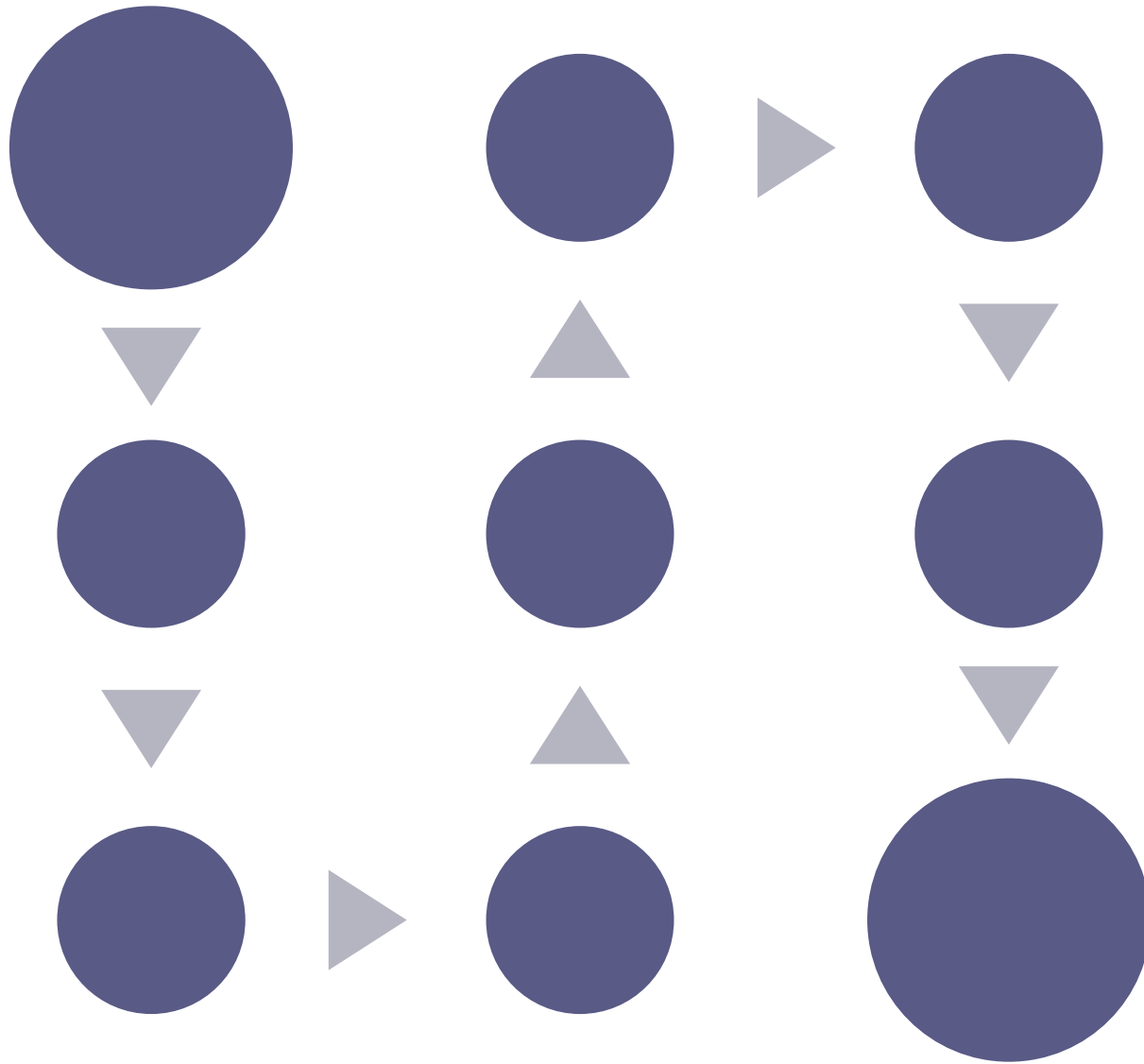
As more than one kind of researcher

◦ Some librarians have advanced degrees or previous careers outside of librarianship

  ◦ Some articles that discuss personal narrativities of researchers like this

◦ Also requires balance

◦ Challenges

  ◦ Often feel they don't belong to either group

  ◦ Eg. A musicologist and librarian; or a digital humanities scholar and a librarian

◦ Benefits

  ◦ Experience with research from another perspective

  ◦ Understanding faculty needs and concerns

  ◦ Possibly, additional publishing, grant writing, and research data management skills

Balance of more than one identity

Librarians aren't just librarians, we each hold other identities as well

We are always all of these identities, even if we don't reveal them in certain situations

Who we were before we were librarians

This influences who you are now as a librarian

We are going to be reflective for a while

Think about why you became a librarian, who your formal and informal 'teachers' were, and the things you found interesting
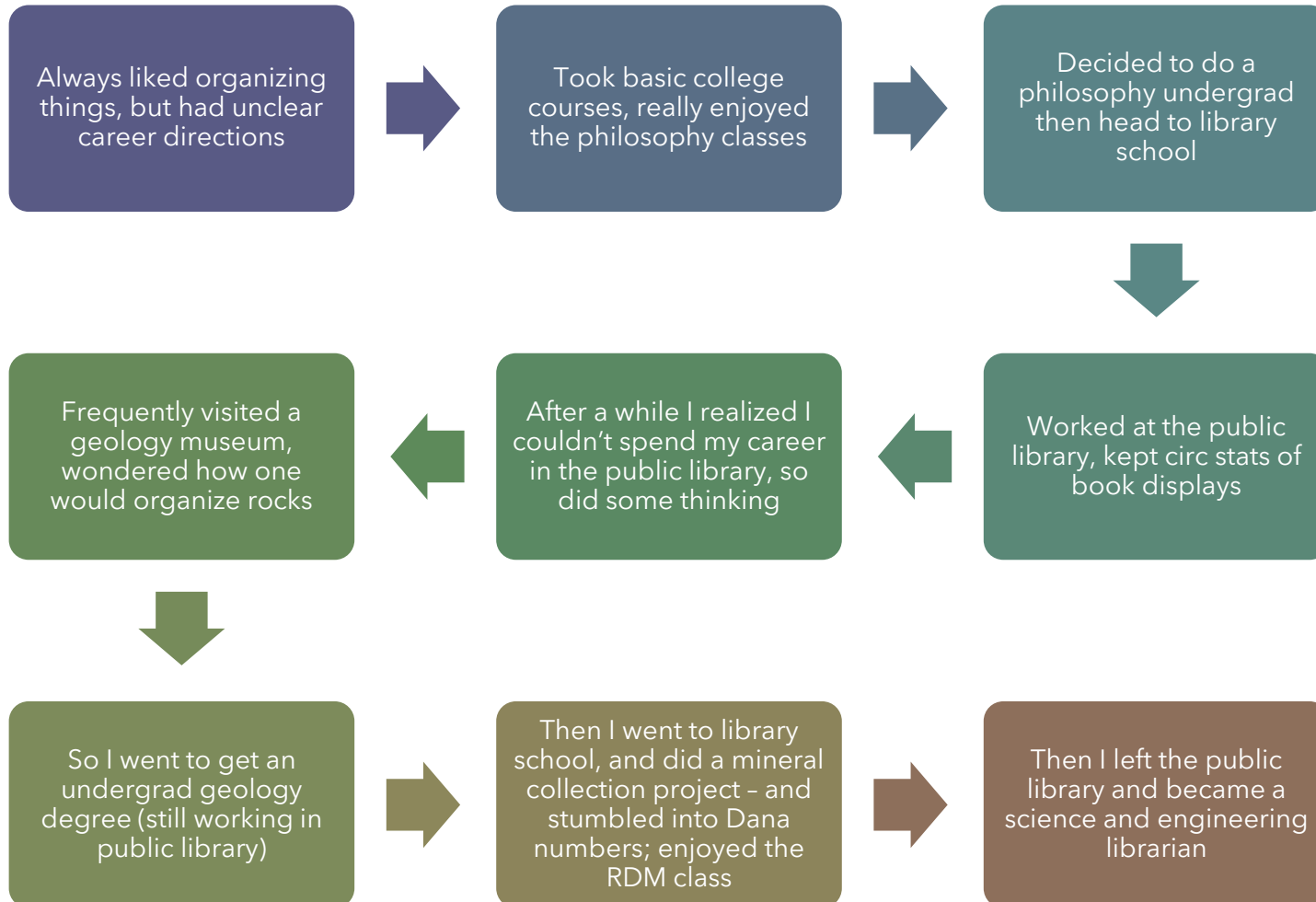
STORIES INTO LIBRARIANSHIP

Mine and yours

Morrill Hall, Nebraska's Natural History Museum
On UNL's campus
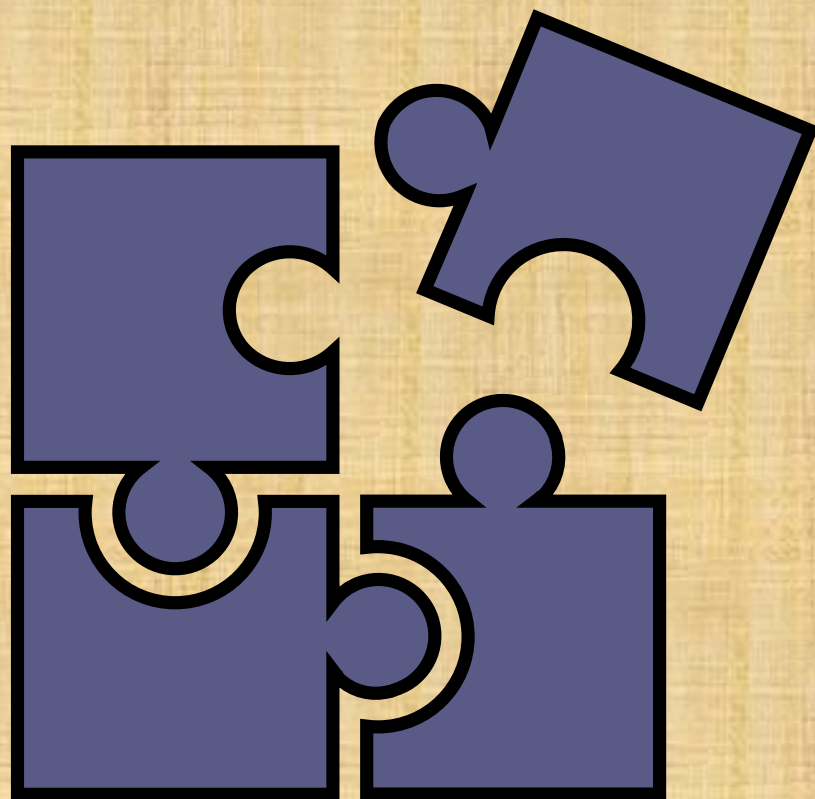Credit: Lincoln Journal Star

As I share my story…

Please be thinking about your story

Always liked organizing things, but had unclear career directions → Took basic college courses, really enjoyed the philosophy classes → Decided to do a philosophy undergrad then head to library school

↓

Frequently visited a geology museum, wondered how one would organize rocks ← After a while I realized I couldn't spend my career in the public library, so did some thinking ← Worked at the public library, kept circ stats of book displays

↓

So I went to get an undergrad geology degree (still working in public library) → Then I went to library school, and did a mineral collection project – and stumbled into Dana numbers; enjoyed the RDM class → Then I left the public library and became a science and engineering librarian
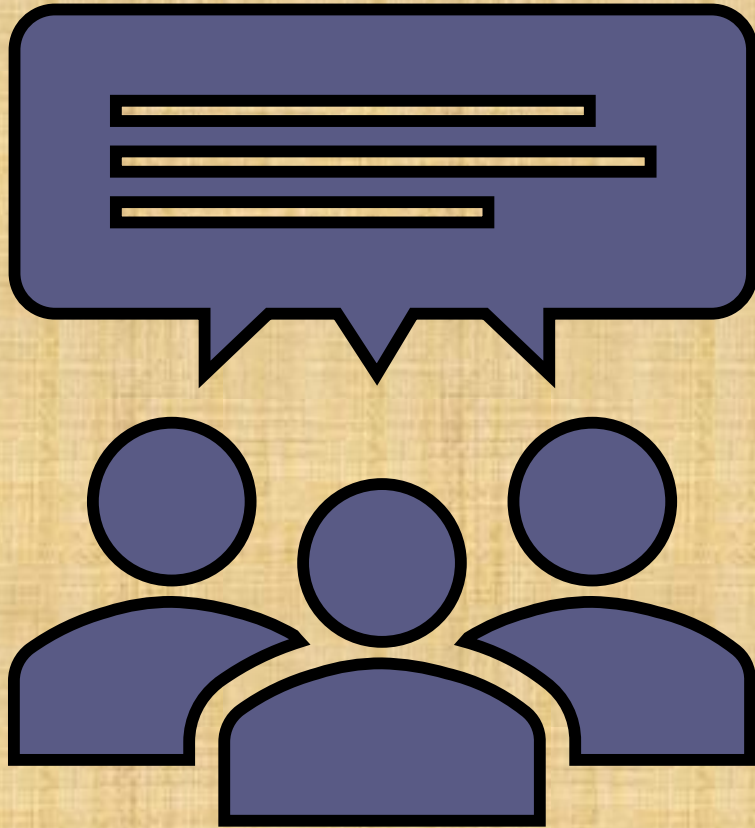
My story

The very abridged version of how and why I became a librarian

5 minutes to yourself to reflect on your story

Why and how you became a librarian

What did you find interesting

5 minutes to share with a neighbor

Share what you are comfortable sharing about your story or reasons for becoming a librarian

QUESTIONS & RESEARCH JOURNEYS

Mine and yours

Mineral Specimen Collection
Credit: Kristen Adams

As I share the continuation of my story…

Please be thinking about your journey into research

It can be a driving force behind what you research, and the skills you build over time

An evolution of a question

Came from an interest in how to catalog or organize rocks and minerals

What is a Dana number?
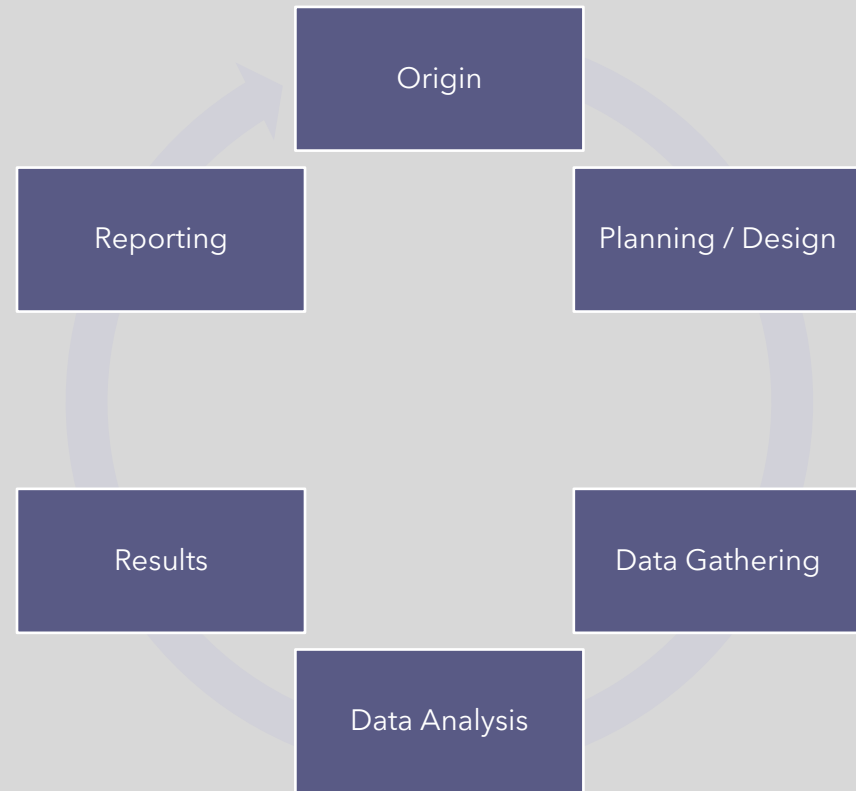
Who was Dana?

Look at this list of publications…

Could do an analysis on that… what exactly did he publish on?

Oh wait, the bibliography is not complete… should remedy that before the analysis

He had a son who also did this kind of work – wonder about doing a similar paper on him in future

Getting to the answer

- Let's do some research, starting by investigating things
  - The practitioner research mentioned earlier
- As some things became answered there were more questions
- This is essentially how the research process (and the scientific method) goes
  - We teach this to our students, and it applies to our research as well
  - There's always more questions
- Life long learners get wrapped up in this cycle of asking and answering questions
  - Uncharted road map - hard to tell what the future questions will be until you get there

Origin

Planning / Design

Data Gathering

Data Analysis

Results

Reporting

Projects that weren't on the road map

As I was trying to work on bibliographic analysis, other opportunities arose, as they do

At a glance, most were related to collection development and management or data literacy

Flexible, Scalable, and Sustainable Data Literacy Instruction: Remote Learning and Collaboration for the Future

Analysis and Assessment of the 'Get it Now' Service, Five Years after Implementation - is it Fulfilling its Purpose Sustainably?

RDM Throughout a Rock's Life (with humans)

Job sculpting in the midst of organizational change

Promoting Transparency and collaboration with a new database A-Z audit and new ER acquisitions workflow

Nurturing collaboration while weeding collections: A new interdepartmental workflow

Revising and rethinking asynchronous data literacy modules: Addition of practical data visualization skills for students of all abilities.

Analyzing unexpected success of a data visualization video series

Revival of a historic bibliography for a modern bibliographic analysis

Mineral identification numbers for librarians, explained through a short history of Dana's classification scheme

Data Literacy on Demand: Creating a Set of Data Literacy Modules for Remote Instruction (book chp.)

How finding your question and following your curiosity can naturally craft your research identity (forthcoming book chp.)

Hueston Woods State Park
Credit: Journal News

Self reflection

Was there a theme to these projects?

Where am I now?

I enjoy and have developed skills in working with data, so that got folded into my, work, and I present or write about these projects

Data Literacy Modules

- Flexible, Scalable, and Sustainable Data Literacy Instruction: Remote Learning and Collaboration for the Future
- Data Literacy on Demand: Creating a Set of Data Literacy Modules for Remote Instruction (book chp.)
- Revising and rethinking asynchronous data literacy modules: Addition of practical data visualization skills for students of all abilities.
- Analyzing unexpected success of a data visualization video series

Collection Work

- Analysis and Assessment of the 'Get it Now' Service, Five Years after Implementation - is it Fulfilling its Purpose Sustainably?
- Job sculpting in the midst of organizational change
- Promoting Transparency and collaboration with a new database A-Z audit and new ER acquisitions workflow
- Nurturing collaboration while weeding collections: A new interdepartmental workflow

James Dana / Geology

- RDM Throughout a Rock's Life (with humans)
- Revival of a historic bibliography for a modern bibliographic analysis
- Mineral identification numbers for librarians, explained through a short history of Dana's classification scheme

Determining major themes

At first I grouped my projects into several areas

This was helpful to get a sense of consistency to my researcher identity, and my work as a librarian

This way shows interests, but what about skills?

It all comes together with methodology

Primarily data analysis and visualization, with some on being a collections practitioner, and an aside on research data management

Research Data Management

- RDM Throughout a Rock's Life (with humans)

Data analysis and visualization

- Analysis and Assessment of the 'Get it Now' Service, Five Years after Implementation - is it Fulfilling its Purpose Sustainably?
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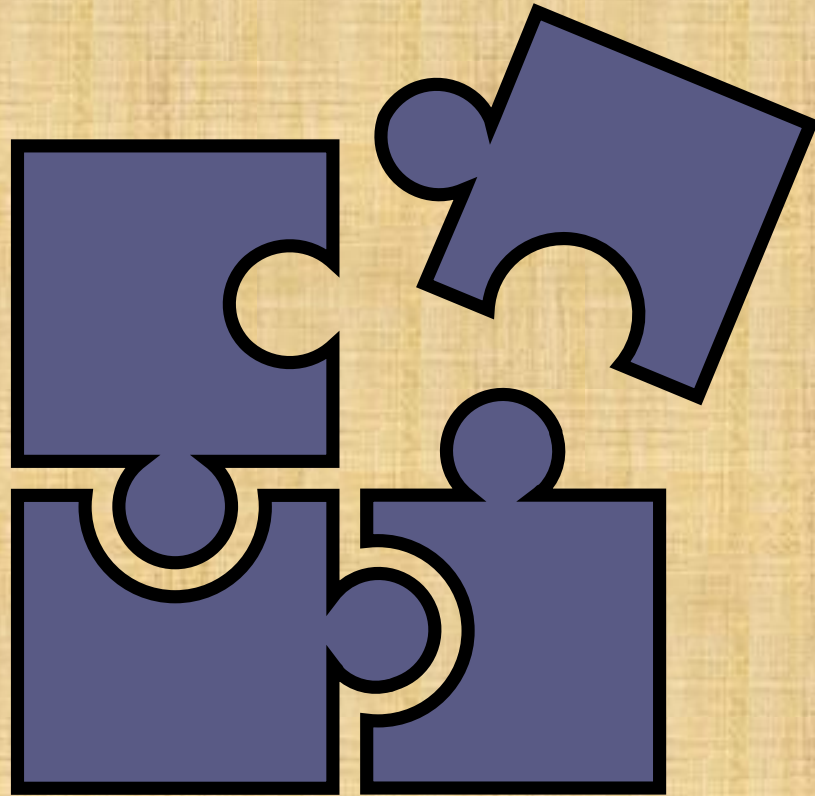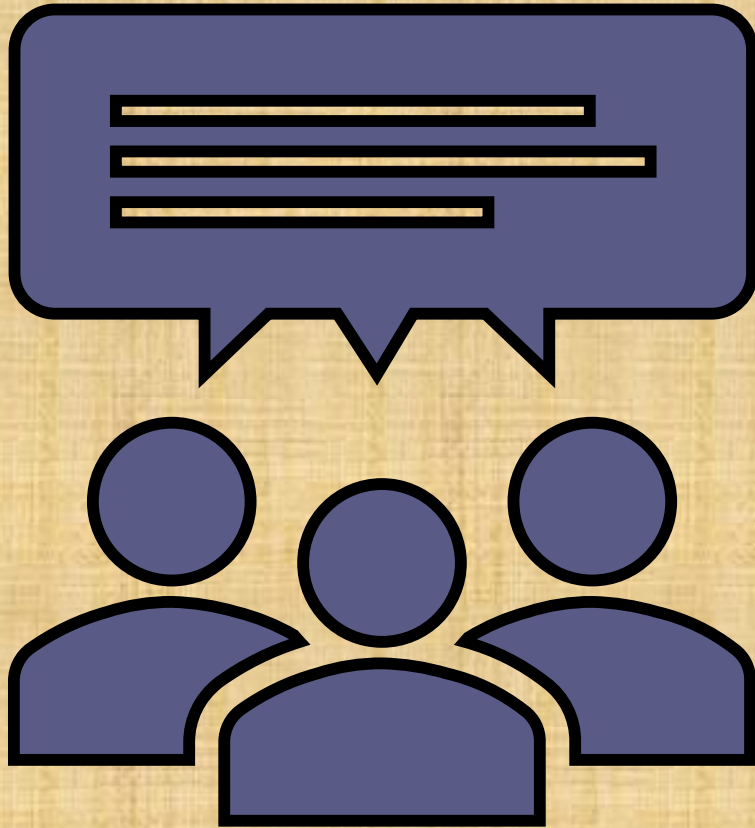
Collections practitioner

- Job sculpting in the midst of organizational change
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5 minutes to yourself

Think about where you are in your research journey

Any questions you still seek answers to?

Past projects you want to pick up again?

How would you group your research projects, by topic or methodology?

5 minutes to share with a neighbor

Share what you are comfortable sharing your research journey so far, and any common threads you've found

FRIENDLY ADVISE

My Advise

Presented in no particular order

It might be conscious or unconscious that you gravitate towards certain projects and avoid others – due to interest or skill sets.

Skills take time to build, but the more you practice them the better you get, and can handle increasingly larger projects.

Think about questions you've had, especially those you haven't found a solid answer to.

Research takes time and effort, so exploring the answer to a question that's interesting can be a real driving force to accomplishing projects.

Look for common threads that run through your research projects.

Little ideas or questions that are interesting to them, can grow in unexpected, but still satisfying ways.

Even different projects can be unified by the research method, this can give opportunity for growth over time, in order to formulate a research identity.

Self reflection is important. Its easy to get busy and not pause to think, but we should.

Suggest avoiding hot topics just to stay relevant – but if you are genuinely interested go for it.

WRAP UP

And discussion

Discussion time

Any advise from the group?

Any discoveries, or re-discoveries you want to share?

Other thoughts to share was we wrap up?

Was this beneficial to you?

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Acknowledgements

O wad some Power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as ithers see us!
It wad frae mony a blunder free us,
An' foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
An' ev'n devotion!

From the Poem, To a Louse,
Written in a Scots dialect by Robert Burns

Wouldn't be the gift to give us
To see ourselves as other see us

**Main Conference
Session
Evaluation**
bit.ly/alao-23

Thank you

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