

Reflecting on the reasons I applied to the University of North Texas' (UNT) Master of Library Science (MLS) program, learning how to build the Zen center catalog where I practice was my top priority. I entered the program and am still holding an associate position at the Gwinnett County Public Library located in Metro Atlanta. I also anticipated that the knowledge and skills that I acquired in the MLS program would better serve library users in the Metro Atlanta area. I could not have been more right and also wrong: UNT's MLS program has prepared me to be an information professional for users in any setting. The skills that I have acquired pursuing the Information Organization concentration at UNT are lucrative for any organization, worldwide. I have the technical skills to prepare me for the global workforce.

As I embark on my journey as a global professional, there are a few artifacts of learning that I would like to highlight that demonstrate my abilities as an information professional. In Fall 2020, while taking the Information Access and Knowledge Inquiry (INFO 5600), I discovered who I am as a professional. After reading VanScoy (2012) for the *Reading Reflection and Information Services Philosophy* assignment, I synthesized the list of roles that describe information professionals' interactions with information users into my professional philosophy. The Reading Reflection and Information Services Philosophy gave me the verbiage to explain my professional experience since my first job as an Assistant Language Teacher (ALT) in Japan.

Since working in Japan, I have always sought positions that allowed me to work with diverse populations. One of the most rewarding aspects of my current position as a library associate is that I serve a county where thirty-percent of the library users are non-native speakers of English. To best serve Gwinnett County's population, I have assumed the following roles, as prescribed by VanScoy (2012): Information Provider, Instructor, Guide, and the Partner. I have given examples of my professional practice for each role in the [Professional Philosophy of Practice](#). Working with diverse populations has improved my professionalism in two ways: 1) Working with diverse cultures and identities has increased my cultural competency; 2) Working in diverse settings has led me to pursue lifelong learning to acquire and maintain globally competitive skills.

There were other course learning experiences in the program that advanced my professionalism as a global professional. During the *Career Development Project* that I completed in the course Information and Knowledge Professions (INFO 5000), I participated in the *Information Science in Africa: Past, Present, & Future* webinar hosted by the international information professional organization, Association for Information Science & Technology (ASIS&T). Participating in this webinar was rewarding because I learned from experts about the trends impacting Africa's information professionals. To read more about my experience, click the following link to my learning artifacts for [ALA Competency 8: Administration & Management](#). The courses where I learned technical skills that I believe will support me as a global professional are: Cataloging I (INFO 5210), Information Organization (INFO 5200), Intro to Digital Libraries (INFO 5740), Metadata I (INFO 5223), Web Development (INFO 5814). The courses aforementioned, I have completed. I have enrolled, Spring 2021 in the following courses that will also advance my goals to attain technical skills: Data Modeling (INFO 5707), Metadata II (INFO 5224), and Project Management for Information Systems (INFO 5306).

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When I first entered the program, my goal was to attain skills in cataloging to properly build the cataloging system at the Zen center where I practice. During Spring 2020, when I was enrolled in INFO 5200, Information Organization, and INFO 5740 Intro to Digital Libraries, I realized that I should keep an open mind toward my professional goals. I enjoyed both courses very much, mainly because I was attaining new, measurable skills. For example, in INFO 5200, I learned the steps to subject analysis and how to create a thesaurus. I also learned the critical role that controlled vocabulary plays in the precision and recall of an information retrieval system. In the INFO 5740 course, I attained skills in developing a digital library in the Omeka platform. The Omeka platform is a widely used open-source web platform used for creating digital collections. The following links lead to the artifacts of my learning [INFO 5200](#) (ALA Competency 3: Organization of Recorded Knowledge and Information) and [INFO 5740](#) (ALA Competency 4: Technological Knowledge and Skills).

I thoroughly enjoyed learning from the Information Organization and Intro to Digital Libraries courses. Therefore, I consulted my advisor, Dr. Shawne Miksa, for her guidance for other courses that would prepare me with technical information organization skills. I often consulted Dr. Miksa, and she always imparted her wisdom about what skills relevant to the job market. In the Summer semester of 2020, I completed INFO 5223, Metadata I, and INFO 5814, Web Development. Both courses complemented the other because I learned web programming languages XML (Metadata I) and HTML & CSS (Web Development) in both courses. As a beginner in web programming languages, I found that the instruction in both courses was very supportive. The instructors scaffolded the learning and were available to answer any questions I had. I am pointing out these courses' supportive instruction because it served as a model for me in my professionalism. My position at work requires me to answer questions and provide resources to library users. Because I felt supported in school, it increased my learning and pleasure with the assignments. Also, it reinforced how I should behave as a professional during a turbulent, social climate: I took these courses during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, yet the instructors maintained excellent instruction. The following link provides evidence of my learning in both the Metadata I and Web Development courses; The artifacts meet [ALA Competency 6: Research](#).

Fall 2020 semester, I enrolled in another course to enhance my technical skills, Cataloging I, INFO 5210. Before Cataloging I, I had no exposure to cataloging practices and standards. I was not entirely sure what to expect initially, but the course exceeded my expectations. I completed Cataloging I, feeling more confident in using the catalog at work. Also, I feel more confident in my search strategy for customers and myself because I now understand the capabilities and limitations of information retrieval systems. I learned how to use industry standards and tools to catalog information resources. My biggest takeaway from the Cataloging I course is that the cataloging professional must ensure that the bibliographic relationships among information resources can be retrieved in an information system. By doing so, the cataloger's role is to ensure that an information organization system meets the four user's tasks as prescribed by the Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR): Find, Identify, Select, Obtain. The following artifact of learning from Cataloging I is found in the following link, [ALA Competency 3: Organization of Recorded Knowledge & Information](#).

In closing, the MLS program at the University of North Texas has given me the confidence and skills to be an excellent information professional. The next step I will take professionally is

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to seek positions with globally based companies. I believe the skills that I have acquired in the program will place me at the top of the job candidacy pool. In fact, between November 2020 and January 28, 2021, I have had four recruiters contact me about positions that match my qualifications. Although it felt great to be contacted by recruiters before my graduation this May 2021, I will keep my Gwinnett County Public Library position. Moreover, it is both rewarding and satisfying to have potential employers affirm that obtaining the Master of Library Science degree from the University of North Texas will advance my career.

Reference

VanScoy, A. (2012). Inventing the future by examining traditional and emerging roles for reference librarians. In M. L. Radford (Ed). *Leading the reference renaissance: Today's ideas for tomorrow's cutting-edge services* (3rd ed. pp. 79-94). Neal-Schuman.