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Résumé de l'article

Au cours des dernières décennies, les partenariats et les programmes entre les écoles secondaires et les bibliothécaires et bibliothèques universitaires ont été largement abordés dans la littérature en bibliothéconomie. Ces collaborations existent souvent afin d'aider les élèves du secondaire à développer leurs compétences informationnelles et de permettre une transition plus facile vers la recherche de niveau universitaire. Cet article examine les activités actuelles des bibliothèques universitaires ontariennes quant à aux programmes de sensibilisation auprès des écoles secondaires qui ont comme objectif de combler l'écart entre la formation secondaire et postsecondaire. Le but de cette enquête, menée par le biais de sondages en ligne et d'entrevues avec des bibliothécaires universitaires de la province, est de fournir un aperçu des activités de sensibilisation auprès des écoles secondaires et de mettre en valeur les bienfaits et les défis de tels programmes. Elle présente également les raisons pour lesquelles certaines bibliothèques n'offrent plus de telles activités ou de tels programmes. Cette analyse des diverses activités vise à susciter davantage de discussions et d'idées que les bibliothèques universitaires peuvent utiliser pour établir des liens avec les bibliothèques des écoles secondaires.

Connections Beyond Campus: Ontario University Library Outreach Programs for High Schools

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Abstract / Résumé

Over the past few decades, partnerships and programming between secondary school and post-secondary librarians and libraries have been widely discussed in library literature. These collaborations often exist to help high school students develop information literacy (IL) skills and to provide a smoother transition to university-level research. This paper examines current high school outreach activities at Ontario university libraries that aim to bridge the IL gap between high school and post-secondary education.

The purpose of this research, conducted through online surveys and interviews with academic librarians in the province, is to provide a snapshot of high school outreach activities and to highlight the benefits and challenges of such programming. It also examines why some libraries no longer offer such activities or programs. This analysis of the variety of outreach activities aims to generate discussion and ideas that academic libraries can use to connect with high school libraries.

Au cours des dernières décennies, les partenariats et les programmes entre les écoles secondaires et les bibliothécaires et bibliothèques universitaires ont été largement abordés dans la littérature en bibliothéconomie. Ces collaborations existent souvent afin d'aider les élèves du secondaire à développer leurs compétences informationnelles et de permettre une transition plus facile vers la recherche de niveau universitaire.

Cet article examine les activités actuelles des bibliothèques universitaires ontariennes quant à aux programmes de sensibilisation auprès des écoles secondaires qui ont comme objectif de combler l'écart entre la formation secondaire et postsecondaire.

Le but de cette enquête, menée par le biais de sondages en ligne et d'entrevues avec des bibliothécaires universitaires de la province, est de fournir un aperçu des activités de sensibilisation auprès des écoles secondaires et de mettre en valeur les bienfaits et les défis de tels programmes. Elle présente également les raisons pour lesquelles certaines bibliothèques n'offrent plus de telles activités ou de tels programmes. Cette analyse des diverses activités vise à susciter davantage de discussions et d'idées que les bibliothèques universitaires peuvent utiliser pour établir des liens avec les bibliothèques des écoles secondaires.

Keywords / Mots-clés

outreach, information literacy, high schools, partnerships, collaboration

sensibilization, maîtrise de l'information, bibliothèques universitaires, écoles secondaires, partenariats, collaborations

Introduction

Over the past few decades, partnerships and programming between secondary school and post-secondary librarians and libraries have been widely discussed in library literature (Burhanna, 2007; Burhanna, 2013; Burhanna & Jenson, 2006; Courtney, 2009; Smallwood, 2010). These collaborations often aim to help high school students develop research skills in order to bridge the information literacy (IL) gap that exists between high school and university and to provide a smoother transition to university-level research.

Many of these books, articles, and case studies refer to outreach programs at American institutions; however, several collaborations and conversations are happening in Canada. This paper examines current high school outreach activities at Ontario university libraries in which one of the main goals is to bridge the IL gap between high school and post-secondary education. The purpose of this research is to provide a snapshot of outreach activities and to outline the benefits and challenges of such programming. It also provides a more fulsome view of the topic by examining why some libraries no longer offer or choose not to offer such activities. This analysis of the variety of outreach activities aims to generate discussion and ideas that academic librarians can use to connect with their high school counterparts.

This research was approved by the University of Toronto Research Ethics Board (Protocol #00036861).

Literature Review

High school outreach: past and present

Discussions surrounding the topic of high school students at university libraries can be found in library literature from more than a half-century ago, when Craig and Perrine (1962) surveyed high school students' reasons for accessing university libraries in and around Houston, Texas, and debated whether academic libraries should open their doors to student groups not connected with the university. Courtney (2001) provided an historical account dating back to the 1950s on unaffiliated users within academic libraries, in which H. Vail Deale noted that "town and gown" relations were of importance to academic institutions and argued for institutions to allow and encourage library access to this group (as cited in Courtney, 2001, p. 473). When discussing formal instruction to high school students in academic libraries, Cosgrove (2001) outlined ten goals, cited from library literature dating back to the 1980s, in a list of benefits for offering such a program, including easing library anxiety, encouraging lifelong learning, promoting higher education, and aiding the transition to post-secondary education.

Burhanna and Jensen (2006) outlined more recent high school and university library collaborations to bridge the information literacy (IL) skills gap: a team at Kent State Universities Libraries created initiatives for high school students, including a library outreach program, a website with IL modules for high schools to access, and online IL assessment. This formal library research program, entitled "Informed Transitions," provides an excellent model and checklist for whether academic libraries should run such programs, with question prompts and considerations such as institution type, supporting the university's overall mission, and resource needs (Burhanna, 2007). Other research has suggested starting earlier than senior-level high school students, with ideas such as providing library tours and story time at academic libraries for younger K-12 students (Coleman & McCraw, 2009). Lewis and Mathuews (2020) examined secondary and post-secondary library services, which include IL initiatives, resources, and spaces, to help make a student's transition to a higher education institution smoother. This qualitative research study conducted with high school librarians led to better collaborations with post-secondary librarians because it pointed out the different structures and systems in place in the different libraries. In Zoellner and Potter's (2010) study on library instructional programming in high schools, further partnership ideas beyond the typical academic library visit included librarian-led workshops for high school teachers, who are usually responsible for creating research assignments. With the goal of creating easily accessible and low-cost resources, a team of academic librarians in Arkansas outlined an example of an online directory of curriculum resources geared to K-12 educators in their state (Cameron et al., 2019).

Studies continue to highlight that students' research and writing skills may not be at a level expected for when they enter university (Head, 2013) and that they often have trouble evaluating online news sources they find through social media (Wineburg et al., 2016). As Saunders et al. (2017) noted in their study's conclusion on the IL skills gap in this area, there is "a need for better communication and coordination between high school and college librarians in order to prepare students for their transition to college"

(p. 282). Because this skills gap among students transitioning from high school to university remains prevalent, continued and growing collaboration between library staff in both sectors remains both relevant and necessary.

A Canadian context

Revelations of an IL and research skills gap are neither new nor relegated to the United States. The belief that an IL gap existed between high school and post-secondary students was discussed in Canadian library literature as far back as 1985. Matheson and Williams (1985), two University of Calgary librarians, referred to assessments that revealed first-time post-secondary library users were not prepared to use academic library resources and services effectively, noting in particular that this generation's first-year students lacked skills such as "why and how to use indexing and abstracting services … and when and why journal articles can and should be used" (p. 36). More than a decade later, at York University, Daniel (1997), examined the same question regarding the skills students need to transition from high school to post-secondary education, and she recommended "increased communication between high school teacher-librarians and academic librarians" (p. 58). In her study of Ontario high school students, Daniel also noted that the university library was an unfamiliar, and likely intimidating, experience for first-year students, who were unaccustomed to the sheer volume of resources available to them.

In surveys conducted over the past decade, faculty and librarians at Ontario universities have continued to note students' "poor research skills," with over 55% surveyed believing first-year students are less prepared for post-secondary education than in the past (Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations, 2009). When asked about their own post-secondary preparedness, first-year Ontario students admitted they did not feel confident with what were termed basic academic skills (Grayson et al., 2019). In the research category, an overall mean of 21% of first-year students at four Ontario universities noted they felt unconfident or very unconfident with their research skills, with over one-quarter (29%) identifying the subcategories "Difficulty in identifying good sources for essays" and "Lack of confidence in other than online search abilities for essays" as the most difficult skills in the research skills area (p. 16).

When presented with testing surveys, students have clearly demonstrated their lack of IL understanding. A survey conducted with Edmonton, Alberta high school students (n = 103) looked at their IL proficiency and preparedness when transitioning to post-secondary education (Smith et al., 2013). Survey results showed "very poor information literacy skills" among the sample of students surveyed, with a mean score of 50.7% on the Information Literacy Test (ILT) and with 19% of students scoring a "proficient average" (p. 93).

In order to bridge this IL gap in Canada and boost research skills among students embarking on post-secondary studies, multiple articles have outlined ideas for outreach programs in Canada. At Okanagan College in British Columbia, librarians created a video project to identify the IL expectations of post-secondary instructors for incoming students (Sigalet et al., 2013). Of the instructors surveyed, 73% believed that their

students "did not have the research skills needed to succeed in postsecondary education" (p. 45). The survey and project results show that these missing research skills need to be addressed at both the secondary and post-secondary level. Recommendations from the survey results highlight the need for continued collaborations between the two sectors to improve the IL gap.

A few articles related to Ontario K-12 schools' and academic libraries' partnership were located in formally published library literature; one from 27 years ago outlining a partnership between Waterloo high school, University of Waterloo, and Wilfrid Laurier University librarians (Hendley, 1991), and a more recent book chapter that highlights a science-based online portal created at University of Guelph Libraries geared at high school science teachers (Lackeyram et al., 2013). The portal provides free resources such as lesson plans and academic skills support modules, including searching for scientific journal articles because many students have little experience searching for this type of scholarly material.

However, there is more high school outreach programming being done in Ontario than has been published. In an initial scan of 21 Ontario university library websites, eight institutions listed information dedicated to high school programming or outreach. Additionally, multiple presentations at OLA's annual Super Conference (see Buchansky et al., 2019; Burgess & Vitez, 2016; Bury et al., 2019) as well as a recent jointly sponsored conference hosted by Ontario College and University Library Association (2019) and Ontario School Library Association have shown agreement that more can be done in this area.

Methodology

To gain a better understanding of current high school IL outreach programming at university libraries (beyond the information provided on library websites), an online survey was created using Google Forms. The survey (see Appendix A) consisted of nine questions about high school IL outreach in university libraries. It was circulated through the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) listserv and emailed directly to contacts listed on library webpages that mentioned high school outreach programs, which showed that some form of outreach was or had been available. The email invitation, including a survey link, was circulated in winter, 2018.

At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to provide a contact name and email or phone number, should they wish to be contacted for a follow-up interview. Interviews were conducted either in-person, on the phone, or online through video-conferencing platforms (Skype or Zoom), whichever was most convenient for the interviewee.

The librarians who agreed to be interviewed worked at institutions in various parts of the province:

- One university library from the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)
- Three university libraries from Southwestern Ontario
- One university library from Northern Ontario

Before the interviews were scheduled, the interviewees received a letter of consent (see Appendix B); closer to the date of the interview, they received a list of questions (see Appendix C). The letter of consent explained that the follow-up interview would be semi-structured and some follow-up questions would be asked, depending on interviewee's responses.

The survey was designed to elicit how and why (or why not) university libraries offer surrounding high school IL instruction or outreach programming or services, and to provide a better understanding of the nature and scope of such outreach programs in Ontario university libraries. The subsequent follow-up interviews examined the implementation, goals, benefits, and challenges of running such a program, so that other libraries can consider offering such initiatives in the future.

Survey Results

More than half (13) of the 21 libraries within OCUL responded to the online survey, providing a response rate of 62%. All survey respondents said that they offer some form of high school outreach. However, one respondent noted later in the survey that they were phasing out the high school outreach programming at their library to focus on other institutional priorities.

The average number of classes or sessions offered during the academic year was 8.3, with 30 being the highest number of sessions and two being the lowest number of sessions. Ten of the libraries (77%) had offered such outreach programming for 7 years or more, and the remaining libraries had offered programming for somewhere between 1-3 years and 4-6 years, as Table 1 indicates.

Table 1

Number of Years of Offering High School Outreach Programs

Length	# of respondents	Percentage
1-3 years	2	15%
4-6 years	1	8%
7+ years	10	77%

n = 13

The types of outreach or programming offered were consistent among the respondents, with 77% offering library tours (see Table 2), followed by general information literacy workshops (69%) and customized information literacy workshops (62%).

Table 2

Types of Outreach Offered

Type of outreach	# of respondents*	Percentage of respondents*
Library tours	10	77%
General information literacy workshops	9	69%
Customized information literacy workshops	8	62%
High school professional development workshops	1	8%

n = 13
* Respondents were able to choose more than one type of outreach if relevant.

When asked if there were any parameters set for the types of groups able to request outreach sessions at the library, 54% of respondents stated that the group had to be a local high school. More than one-quarter (30%) had no programming parameters. Table 3 outlines all parameters indicated by the respondents.

Table 3

Outreach Programming Parameters

Parameters	# of respondents*	Percentage of respondents*
Local high schools only	7	54%
No parameters	4	30%
Class size maximum	2	15%
Senior grades only	2	15%
Must have teacher present	1	8%

n = 13
* Respondents were able to choose more than one parameter if relevant.

In terms of promoting high school outreach, the most common method, noted by 8 of the 12 respondents, was information on the library's website or a dedicated webpage (see Table 4). The next most common form of promotion was direct communication with the school or school board, mentioned by 5 out of 12 respondents. Several other modes of promotions were mentioned, including word of mouth, relationship building over time, or attending teacher-librarian professional development events.

Table 4

Outreach Promotions

| Method	# of respondents*	Percentage of respondents*
Information on library website	8	67%
Direct communication with school/school board	4	33%
Other (e.g., word of mouth, presentations at teacher meetings)	7	58%

n = 12
* Respondents were able to choose more than one method of promotion if relevant.

When asked if their libraries conducted any assessment of these outreach programs, most respondents said no (77%), as Figure 1 illustrates. Of the 23% that did conduct assessment with the high school group, methods included online surveys, follow-up with the high school teachers, or in-class feedback forms.

Figure 1

Assessment practices for high school outreach programs

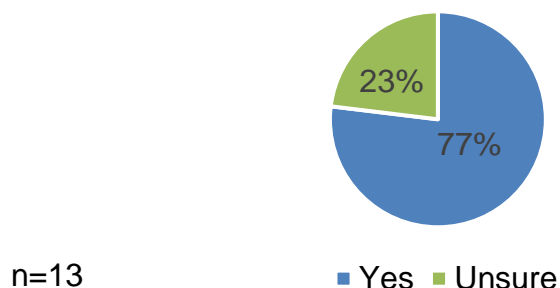Is assessment conducted on these programs?

23%

77%

n=13   ■ Yes ■ No
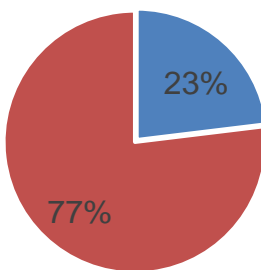
Despite the lack of formal assessment, most respondents (77%) believed that the outreach programming was well received by attendees, with 23%, respondents noting they were unsure (see Figure 2).

Figure 2

Reception of program by high schools

In your opinion, is the program well-received?

n=13   ■ Yes ■ Unsure

Respondents were also asked to reflect on their programming, with this prompt: "Is there anything you would look to change about the outreach program to high schools?" The nine responses received are quoted below:

"We do not provide much outreach just because we do not have much space in the library and its usually super busy here."

"More actively promote it—which we don't do currently."

"Yes. Provide more specialized workshops (e.g. maker space, archives, ...)."

"We don't do any active outreach to high schools; we wait for them to contact us. We may see more interest based on our raised profile with Undergraduate Admissions and Recruitment as a campus tour destination and experiential learning opportunity."

"Nope—has worked well since 1975."

"More co-ordination between different departments; planning around time beneficial to both parties (i.e. balancing university demands and schools')."

"Ultimately, we decided that current high school students are not our core constituents—and that it made better sense to focus our efforts on existing campus activities."

"It is not a 'formal part' of what we do—so the capacity building is not there. Different librarians give different amounts of attention to it, so the consistency isn't there. This is tough because we are trying to do many things and this isn't always the priority."

"Better tracking over the years for a better transition to university."

Interviews

In the online survey, six individuals from five academic libraries in Ontario agreed to a follow-up interview regarding their experience and opinions of any high school outreach programming at their institution. Of the five institutions being discussed, three had current programming and two had programming in the past but were either winding it down or no longer offering it. The following themes emerged from the interviews.

Goals and priorities of high school outreach

Multiple interviewees mentioned the goals and priorities of the program, especially in relation to developing and running a program that involves working with students not affiliated with the university. Some comments about why the program was started and some of the goals behind it included:

> "We're trying to expose our students to the world of information than what they probably wouldn't have at their high school libraries." (University library #1)

> "One of the goals behind the outreach [was] to create a safe environment where students could explore what it was like to be in a university setting and feel like what it would be like when asked to do a project that would require university research." (University library #2)

> "it's community-based, so from the community point of view … as a university, we're good at making certain community outreach, but this another part of community outreach that's very important because we're getting students who may come to the university—or may not—but we're letting them know that they're always welcome whether they come our not … that creates like … an open-door concept. We're not this building that just 'high and mighty,' just pumping out PhDs, and we don't care about the average community member." (University library #3)

Benefits of high school outreach programs

Most interviewees explained that one of the main benefits of a high school outreach program is that an introduction to university research may prompt some students to consider applying to post-secondary education, especially at the university that they visit:

> "One of the benefits was that it sends a good message to the community in general. [University's name] as an institution, we would draw high schools from the city, but also some schools from the county. So, a lot of those students, who are essentially rural, in rural communities, they don't know what a university was like. So, I think exposure for that audience was probably really good." (University library #1)

> "One of the [University] President's pillars is access to education. And if we are doing sessions, especially with high school students who may be less likely to go

to university without a bit of prompting, it could be a factor that makes a little bit of a difference." (University library #5)

"First of all, we want them to get oriented to our library so that they don't have to fear when they come in on the weekend, or on Sunday that may not be welcome, so we want to make sure we do a welcome when they come on their own … that this is a good introduction to post-secondary universities and libraries and so even if they don't decide to come to [university's name] they will at least have a sense of what they will have to do … that if they get used to [university's name], they'll think about coming here. This is a primary purpose." (University library #4)

One interviewee noted the unique benefit of running high school outreach programs through the campus library, which is a neutral space not tied to a faculty or program of study:

"I think the library is a really good place to advertise university to students. Especially students who may have not made up their minds about what they want to do. So, we're not the Faculty of (blah blah blah) trying to influence those people to come into our faculty. We're neutral ground in a way, and so the library being out there, we don't promote a certain path in terms of subject or what university program you're going to go into. I think we're pretty well placed as the library to offer these ideas to students in terms of higher education, access to it, affordability … overall idea … that's how I would like to think about it." (University library #5)

Challenges of high school outreach programs

Although interviewees highlighted a lot of positive feedback and benefits, high school outreach programming is not without its challenges. The most common hurdles related to space, timing of visits, library staff buy-in, and availability. Responses included:

"The main challenge we had was that we had demand across campus for regular information literacy from our core audiences and basically high school was outside the core audience. We phased it out, and we gave enough warning, and contacted the teachers who use the program regularly and … didn't get a lot of push back, people understood. … I think one of the other challenges was the timing, and so we ended up not having a lot of rooms for them either. So, when you've got to choose, you choose your students who are coming to get their degree first." (University library #1)

"Some (high school teachers) want to bring the younger students. That can be difficult … difficult space limitations and how to cap 25 students, just because of the area that is left for them to work in. Time of day can be a challenge. Our building fills up after about 11am, but some of these are afternoon courses, with a teacher teaching an afternoon course. And they have to bring the students in the morning, and the teacher has to make arrangements with their [other] classes. So that's a challenge … picking the right time of day for us and them …

time of day when we've got enough space, enough computers to work at. Because then I don't want to disturb our students with a bustling group of people." (University library #2)

"At the beginning, when I started doing this there was a lot of resistance from a lot of librarians. They were like, 'I don't understand why you're spending time with students who aren't paying to come to university. Spend your time with the students who are actually students here. Don't worry about people who may or may not be students here.' … right now we don't have that, but 15 to 20 years ago that was the feeling. That I was spending too much time with high school students, and I kept thinking, 'I have time for all of it' … I could fit it all in. So, I think some of the challenges sometimes is that it's difficult for people to see the benefit serving a group of people who may or may not be part of your core group of people." (University library #3)

Planning and logistics

With an outside group coming to visit a campus, often for the first time, some elements must be considered. Interviewees noted that in planning for a large group to visit their library, considering the time of day or year was crucial, but they also needed to review how students would access print and electronic materials, especially if they would be working on an assignment. Embedding the lesson as part of an ongoing assignment seemed to be key to holding students' interest in the program or workshop:

"The disappointment would come in to the fact that we said, 'No you cannot take these books home' and 'no you don't have access to these articles after you leave.' It was mostly whatever they could get done in a day. And we would be with them for about an hour, an hour and a half at once. And they would go do some stuff, and we would leave them in a room with a teacher, and we would go back about an hour and a half after that and spend some more time with them and answer questions. So, it was mostly half a day event." (University library #5)

"It is always based on an assignment, and that's the way we hook the students, because there's no real reason for them … if they're just coming to explore the library, their amount of retention and care about what we're saying is low." (University library #3)

"Student come to campus, and I usually take a 25 to 30 minute introduction, as part of a demo, show two to three key databases or sometimes the catalogue, if the teacher wants to borrow the books. But usually it's the databases. The demo will usually explain some key concepts … and we'll talk about what is peer review, so they know that that's a thing that exists … and after that the teacher will have booked them 1 to 2 hours of off-site research. We are still fortunate that we have 20 computers that are still off by themselves on floors, where I can log in the students with guest accounts. They can work on their projects, and then I do one on one with them for those two hours." (University library #2)

Beyond the one-shot library workshop

During the interviews, librarians provided some creative ideas and ways that they have run sessions in the past, and solutions for those libraries considering offering sessions for the future. As previously mentioned, connecting the library visit to a high school assignment seemed to engage students more in the lesson because there was an immediate need for the information. One library took the outreach beyond library research by collaborating with faculty on campus to run a mock lecture that would give high school students a real-life university experience. Providing a workshop that looks beyond the library and adds a lecture-style component or invites current undergraduate students to speak about their transition from high school to university classes could also be considered.

> "This is a full-day event, where students would come in, we partnered with other faculties on campus, so let's say a history class was coming in, we would partner with a history department … we could target a history professor that was fun and flexible and willing to give time to, now it's turned into, yes this is a safe space, so let's see if you can do it, but more of a recruitment idea as well. And the idea that we would team teach … I also wanted the students to actually feel what it would be like to be in a university classroom, regardless of whether I was teaching library stuff or not. … And so, it wasn't just about the library, it was about the research, tied to a subject, tied to people, and so it was a really nice with the lectures, and the information literacy lecture, and going to the library to actually use what we've learned." (University library #3)

> "It would be nice to maybe have a couple of first-year students or fourth-year students come and give a little bit of a testimonial, maybe we can work on creating some of those resources or links where current students can talk about their transition … peer mentoring." (University library #5)

Discussion

Survey

There appears to be a sustained interest in university libraries offering outreach opportunities to Ontario high schools. Table 1 illustrates that most of the current outreach programs have been offered for 7 or more years.

As Table 2 shows, the types of outreach offered were fairly consistent among survey respondents, with tours and IL workshops being the norm. One respondent's mention of "high school professional development workshops" illustrates a unique outreach opportunity. This workshop or presentation allows academic librarians to connect with high school teacher-librarians or teachers to provide a better understanding of the research skills students need to succeed at the post-secondary level. Larson-Rhodes (2018) provided a list of possible high school/academic librarian collaborations, such as high school staff visiting nearby academic libraries for a presentation on high school-university transition or academic librarians visiting high schools to provide a similar talk

and learn more about IL instruction and research skills taught in high schools. Larson-Rhodes (2018) also mentioned connecting with "pre-service teachers" (students who are completing their B.Ed.) so they too can observe and learn about the research and IL skills needed to succeed at the post-secondary level. Carlito (2009) noted that face-to-face connections between academic and high school librarians are important to cultivate, with workshop content often involving an approach that is either informational (e.g., school visit requirements, university library resources and services), instructional (e.g., how to get students to use subject databases), or inspirational (e.g., using freely available research and IL tools to benefit high school educators).

In terms of outreach programming parameters, just over half of respondents (54%; see Table 3) noted that they chose to focus only on local high schools. It is worth noting that the Council of Ontario Universities' (COU, 2018) most recent statistics on university applications indicate that on average, 43.9% of the secondary school applicants to Ontario universities come from the institution's "local zone," with some universities having a local secondary school application rate as high as 82.6% (COU, 2018, Table 9A). With these statistics available and in mind, it would be useful for university libraries to see where the incoming first-year undergraduate cohort is coming from and create an outreach program to connect with potential students earlier.

Promoting outreach activities via library websites is one of the more popular methods (used by 67% of respondents; see Table 4). In addition to promoting such outreach activities, libraries could use their virtual space to house resources that are freely available online aimed at this cohort. Some libraries may already be doing this; it was not asked about or mentioned explicitly in the survey. This could provide high schools that are unable to physically attend in-person sessions with additional resources, and Cameron et al. (2019) noted that these resources are sustainable and easy to maintain. Online resources would also have a broader reach than individual visits.

The main area in which high school outreach programs require more understanding and development is assessment. As Figure 1 illustrates, the majority (77%) of respondents' libraries did not assess or evaluate their programs in any formal manner. This is not surprising, because these responses are supported by research that describes the challenges of assessing such high school outreach programs (Angell & Tewell, 2013; Groves, 2019). Thus far, many programs rely on anecdotal evidence through librarian observations and expressions of thank-yous from students and their teacher or teacher-librarian.

Interviews

The themes that emerged from the interviews provide more context for how and why these programs exist (or do not exist) and the benefits and challenges they elicit. In terms of goals or priorities of such programs, common responses focused on community building and making high school students feel more at ease with post-secondary library spaces and research. Research on similar outreach programming has mentioned comparable goals and stated more explicitly the goal of "promoting academic success" among incoming students (Angell & Tewell, 2013, p. 2). Burhanna (2007)

asked whether such outreach activities are part of the library's or university's mission or strategic plan and recommended devising such programming accordingly.

The benefits of high school outreach programs align with the goals: creating community collaborations and helping students become better prepared for academic research and familiar with library resources, services, and spaces. Burhanna (2007) identified similar benefits for such programs throughout the literature, noting that high school visits to university libraries can help ease library anxiety and may aid in student recruitment. Another benefit raised in both the interviews and the literature is that such outreach can aid in recruitment to either the host's institution or post-secondary education in general (Burhanna & Jensen, 2006). However, much like the lack of overall program assessment, no formal numbers seem to be collected related to enrollment based on outreach programs.

Although such outreach programs are associated with many benefits, they also come with drawbacks. Interviewees noted challenges common to most programs, mainly in the areas of space, timing, staff buy-in, and availability. The idea of dedicating time away from "primary constituents," like current students, is one of the main issues with staff buy-in (Angell & Tewell, 2013) and has led to some university libraries ending such programming. Institutions offering similar programming have provided advice such as setting parameters for when programs are offered so they do not interfere with university students' use and need of the library spaces (e.g., Reading Week) (Vercelletto, 2018).

Ideas beyond "one-shot" lessons surfaced in interviews; some participants described novel outreach activities such as day-long events including lectures with faculty, and others made suggestions for connecting current university students and high school students to talk about their own transitions. Offering some form of student testimonial would be a new avenue for communicating what incoming students can expect in relation to academic research. Kent State University Libraries' (2021) "Transitioning to College" online program is one example, and it includes a series of videos with an upper-year student guiding first-year students around the library and providing some insight on post-secondary research expectations.

Limitations and Future Research

This study focused on Ontario universities, both for geographic scope and for understanding of the current landscape within a particular province, given that education is provincially run. Although an email was circulated through the OCUL listserv to reach all Ontario universities, further follow-up could have been conducted to reach all libraries individually, not just those promoting high school outreach programs, to ensure a higher response rate.

Further studies and research on this topic could include examining outreach in other provinces and territories, looking at any collaborative programs and services between high school and college libraries, and gathering perspectives from Ontario high school teachers and teacher-librarians on these post-secondary library outreach initiatives.

Longitudinal research could be conducted to assess such programming and determine what impact, if any, these outreach activities have in improving students' IL skills and post-secondary research preparedness.

Conclusion

High school outreach at Ontario university libraries is currently and frequently occurring, even though it had not been thoroughly outlined in recent literature. This outreach looks very similar to U.S. post-secondary library programing, including its benefits and challenges. More information on assessing such programs is necessary in order to analyze any impact on students' IL skills, beyond the positive feedback received from high school student groups and teachers.

University libraries may still wish to embark on or embed such outreach activities within current IL programming, especially because many libraries' and universities' strategic plans reference community outreach and collaboration as a priority. Furthermore, not all outreach needs to involve in-person library visits and lessons on university campuses. Expanding programming to include professional development activities between academic librarians and teacher-librarians may help foster better understanding of students' IL skills and continued collaborations. Likewise, creating online resources aimed at high school students transitioning to university is another sustainable initiative that does not involve all the challenges of other approaches.

If other Ontario university libraries consider potential outreach activities for a high school audience, they will find various initiatives to choose from, depending on their level of staffing and desired time commitment.

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Appendix A
Online Survey

Preamble:
I am conducting a survey to determine what outreach activities, occurring at Ontario university libraries, are aimed at a high school audience. The questions, below, will help provide some understanding and give an overview of how common (or not) these outreach activities are in universities across the province. The types of programs that would be considered outreach activities from universities to high schools could involve (but are not limited to):

- Workshops for high school students tailored to their assignments delivered at university libraries
- General information literacy, orientation, tours or workshops for high school students delivered at university libraries
- Visits to high school classrooms by university librarians

Please fill out this survey to the best of your knowledge, preferably by December 31, 2018. There is a section at the end for you to include your contact name and email, should you wish to take part in a one-on-one interview at a time that is convenient for you.

This research is approved by the University of Toronto Research Ethics Board (Protocol #00036861).
Thank you,
Heather Buchansky

Does your library currently offer any outreach programs specifically for high school students?
- Yes
- No

If answered 'no' to Question 1:
What are some of the reasons why such programs are not offered?
(e.g., lack of staffing, no interest)
[text box]

Would you consider offering outreach programs to high school students in the future?
- Yes
- No
- Unsure
Please elaborate on your answer above: [text box]

If answered 'yes' to Question 1:
How long have you offered outreach programs to high schools?
- 1-3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7+ years

Do you have any parameters of who you offer outreach to?
(e.g., geographic distance, school boards, class size, grade, subject, assignment topic)
[text box]

Please explain the type of outreach you offer.
(e.g., tours, general workshops, customized workshops based on assignments)
[text box]

Approximately how many sessions/activities do you offer per year? [text box]

How do you promote your program? (Please select all that apply)
- Information on library website
- Direct communication to school (emails, phone calls)
- Direct communication to school board (emails, phone calls)
- Other: [text box]

Have you conducted any assessment of the outreach programs?
- Yes
- No
- Unsure

If you have conducted assessment, what are some of the methods used? (Please select all that apply)
- In-class feedback forms
- Follow-up with students after a period of time
- Follow-up with teacher or teacher/librarian after a period of time
- Other: [text box]

Overall, is the outreach service well-received?
- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Is there anything you would look to change about the outreach program to high schools? [text box]

Please leave your name and email or phone number below if you are interested and willing to be contacted for follow-up questions or an interview. [text box]

Appendix B
Letter of Consent
Letter of Information / Informed Consent

Date:

Dear [interviewee's name]

Thank you for your interest in the follow-up survey related to my research on Ontario university libraries' outreach initiatives to high schools. This next phase of the research process will consist of an interview outlined in this letter.

This research will require about one hour of your time. During this time, you will be interviewed about the outreach programming/initiatives occurring at your library in a bit more detail than the previous online survey questions.

The interview will be conducted either by phone or in person, whichever is most convenient. While the interview will be digitally recorded, the recording will be deleted once it has been typed up. The transcriptions of the interview will be kept on a hard drive on the researcher's computer, which is password protected. Only the main researcher [Librarian's name] will have access to the transcribed documents and interviews. Anonymized interview transcriptions will be retained indefinitely.

The interview will take on a semi-structured approach – a list of questions will be sent to you in advance to help you prepare, however there may be other questions that arise depending on your responses. Sample questions will include:
1. What was the impetus/reason for forming this outreach initiative?
2. What have some of the challenges been (technical, logistical, or otherwise) that you have encountered with these outreach initiatives?
3. What feedback have you received from high school teachers / students/ library administration / university administration?

There are no anticipated risks or discomforts related to this interview. Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason. In the event that you choose to withdraw from the study, any information you provide can be destroyed upon your request.

The results from this study will be presented at library conferences (either in a poster or session), as well as in journal articles of interest to other librarians and/or high school teachers. However, your name will not be used nor any identifying information revealed.
If you wish to receive a copy of the results from this study, or require any information, you may contact me by email at [Librarian's email].
If you have questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research, you may also contact the University [redacted] Research Oversight and Compliance Office – Human Research Ethics Program at [email] or [phone number]

<u>For participant</u>:
I have read (or have been read) the above information regarding this research study on Ontario university libraries' outreach initiatives to high schools and consent to be interviewed for this study.

_____ (Printed Name)
_____ (Signature)
_____ (Date)

Appendix C
List of Interview Questions

1. Are you currently running outreach initiatives to high schools at your library?

If you are currently running outreach initiatives to high schools…

2. Why was this outreach initiative started at your library?
3. What are the goals behind this outreach initiative?
4. Please describe the type of outreach services offered to high schools (e.g. what are the modes of delivery? Topics covered?).
5. Is the high school teacher or teacher-librarian involved in the planning?
   a. If so, what is their role?
   b. If not, what type of support would you like to have from high school staff?
6. What are the benefits for the library in offering these outreach initiatives?
7. What are the challenges for the library in offering these outreach initiatives?
8. What feedback have you received from high school teachers / high school students/ library administration / university administration regarding this initiative?
9. Do you see this as an initiative that your library may expand upon?

If you are no longer running outreach initiatives to high schools…
10. What was (were) the reason(s) behind discontinuing the initiative?
11. What were the benefits for the library in offering these outreach initiatives?
12. What were the challenges for the library in offering these outreach initiatives?
13. What feedback did you receive from high school teachers / high school students/ library administration / university administration regarding this initiative?