

CLIG

BCLA CLIG meeting BPL

February 5th

10am-noon

In attendance:

Anne Bechard (chair, RPL), Heather De Forest (secretary, SFU), Mikale Fenton (NVCL), Shideh Taleban (NVCL), Janeen (FVRL) , Jorge Cardenas (BPL), Nicole Sousa (BPL), Kelty Roberts (VPL), Rachel Burke (FVRL), Wanda Power (iSchool), Andrea Lukic (iSchool), Eleonore Shaffer (VPL), Anthea Goffe (Coquitlam), Tara Thompson (ORL).

Anne welcomed the group to the meeting.

1. Introductions were made around the table, and telephone.
2. Agenda approved, with change in order (item 4, roundtable, moved to later in meeting)
3. Minutes approved
4. Roundtable – deferred to later in meeting
5. Terms of Reference Update.
Anne reported that no issues have arisen in the process. We are a group.
6. Update on Community-led Libraries class at UBC iSchool.
Jorge reported on the class that he and Christie Menzo are teaching this term. There are a good number of enrolled students. It's interesting to balance the academics of the class with the nature of community-led as not academic. One challenge is that librarians working in this model are focused on doing the work, not on creating literature about it. Anne indicated one of the goals of this interest group could be – working on a project collaboratively that we publish. Ideally adding to documents such as: the Working Together toolkit, the writing from John Pateman, and materials from Edmonton and Halifax and in *Perspectives*.

Students in the class, Wanda and Andrea, reported that students enjoying the class. Students talk about it outside of class, bring concepts and readings into other classes, and are engaged with how it fits with other courses, initiatives and practices of librarianship. Wanda shared that people are interested in taking this course when it is taught in the hands-on way that it is currently.

There was discussion about how CL is taught in other iSchools. Jorge notes that the term Community-led is very Canadian.

Andrea told us about a researcher at the University of Tennessee who had recently presented her work on homelessness and libraries. The approach was similar to the CL service model. Wanda mentioned Dr. Nadia Caidi, at the University of Toronto's iSchool, whose work addresses newcomers, inclusion, information, libraries etc and is very interesting and has affinities with CL.

There was also a discussion about terminology. Mikale noted that Canadian public libraries don't have a lot of scholarship on/around them and that in terms of devoting time away from doing the work itself, that's understandable. How important is the language "CL" vs to what's actually being done. Eg how are we connecting with whoever our communities are? We can find good work being done, and not just in libraries, and we don't have a common language across the different areas of work. Perhaps we don't need to be so committed to the terminology. Anne noted that we need to share the work that's being done in libraries to address community challenges.

Wanda suggested that a paper that looks at how these practices are reviewed in the literature and discussed in practice could be useful to people so they have some vocabulary to try in their searches. Mikale agreed and noted a concern that the term CL can make you feel like a failure if you're not doing everything according to the letter of the template /toolkit. Community-engagement is still being done, and in the spirit of CL.

Jorge notes that the opposite is also true: many people are claiming to do CL, but they are doing something that doesn't resemble the spirit of that at all.

Shideh amplified Wanda's suggestion and suggested a creation of keyword snap phrases. Outreach is not the same as community-led, which is a buzzword. Even as a group, we might want to keep going with our understanding of what this is. Mikale: community-led is the aspiration. There are many different ways in which this is manifested but doesn't necessarily hit the target. We need to recognize that libraries are trying to do this, and to articulate the well-known challenges around letting go of ownership and expertise, and around staff and space issues.

Jorge indicated that the final assignment for the CL class is to find a group, community, or space that they want to learn more about and explore it following principles discussed in the class. It could be breweries or coffee shops, but they are asked to not go to areas/groups that are over studied, nor to show up as representing any institution as a librarian.

7. PLIG Journal Club report back.

A number of CLIG members attended the PLIG Journal Club meeting on the topic of CL. Eleonore reported that there was conversation similar to the one we were having. In addition to the challenges of finding literature, at all, on CL, is the challenge of finding Open Access literature on the topic. Rachel said that neither of the two articles that were read and discussed [both are linked on the CLIG pages on the BCLA site] used CL.

It was a good, casual evening with lots of snacks and 15-20 attendees, including academic and health librarians. The biggest issue that came up was challenges within our own institutions that we're already working in. The conversation was blunt, around challenges, definitions, and management priorities.

There was some discussion of how much we can do and promise. Mikale noted that her library is currently redeveloping their room booking policy and it's an example of where a lens of CL comes into policy development, yet it's not a CL policy. It does have a huge effect on ability to do true CL: If a group wants to meet and use space, and all they really need is the space, it is then so different than us going to them and saying "what can we do for you". How do we perfect it? There's a constant negotiation between what staff are saying and what the board is saying and what's feasible.

Jorge reminded us that the next PLIG Journal Club meeting will with the multicultural services committee and told us that articles are currently being selected – hopefully one that merges multicultural services and CL.

8. Update on BCLA Conference Proposals.

Winnifred and Millicent from RPL submitted a proposal for a panel discussion – it was accepted. Panelists include Shideh, Janine, and Nicole. They are preparing the content now – will start with a story to share experiences then talk about how library systems are programming to combat social isolation. The plan is to then conduct an exercise that will help the participants at the session think through some of what was discussed. They are tying it to a research article about libraries and social inclusion.

Jorge and Mikale and representatives from Greater Victoria Public Library and Fraser Valley Regional Library also have a BCLA Conference session confirmed addressing "pedal powered community engagement". Their libraries have book bikes and they will address what they would like to do vs what they can actually do – looking at aspiration vs reality. How can "novelty" items be used strategically, not as mascots. The panel represents four very different processes and outcomes.

9. Chair/Secretary positions.

Both Anne (Chair) and Heather (Secretary) Anne will be stepping down, come May 2019. If you have an interest in either of these positions, please voice it. We need people ready to go in April and will announce names will be announced at the May meeting. If there is great interest, then names will be brought forward at the May meeting. Anne noted that there is flexibility in the planning of this Interest Group goes – Terms of Reference can be adjusted if needed for example. Each position realistically takes about 4 hours of work, plus the meetings. Anne notes that this experience is great for your CV and for networking if you are a new librarian. Please

contact Anne (anne.bechard@yourlibrary.ca) and/or Heather ([heather de forest@sfu.ca](mailto:heather_de_forest@sfu.ca)) with interest/questions, etc.

10. Guest speakers.

We would like to move forward on bringing guest speakers to meetings and/or hosting them remotely. They don't need to be librarians. Community partners, critical people from other fields, would also be great – we can learn from them. If you propose a speaker, you need to follow-up with the secretary rather than expecting a follow-up. You can plan it and provide the information.

We began a list of possible speakers: Carla Fox from Halifax public library, Beth Davies (BPL), an outreach worker from Turning Point Recovery, Nadia Caidi from U of T.

11. Roundtable of successes.

Shideh mentioned the Library Small Grants. Her library makes grants available that support friendship, cross-cultural connections and learning among diverse residents of the community. For example a Culture Day food workshop was created by a member of the Persian community and a member of the Chinese community. A new immigrant indicated the great impact that participating in running a program this way had on her: it gave her confidence to apply for jobs, to step out of her home more and find greater belonging with the larger community.

Anne asked about the budget line for the small grants. Mikale responded that \$2000 comes from general bequests/donations. Currently North Van City Library is creating a wishlist (“if we had the money, here’s what we’d like to do with it”), because many bequests/donations come with specified spending instructions. Many of these programs fall outside of the wheelhouse of “information”. The goal of the Library Small Grants is to bring people together.

Eleonore described her work connecting with temporary modular housing communities. Many of the residents haven't seen the library as a welcoming space for them for a long time. Many of the residents use Little Free Libraries instead. Kelty indicated many residents like the idea of having a take-a-book; leave-a-book shelf. The outreach worker is a key part of establishing the relationships and these housing communities are all being operated by different organizations, such as PHS, Raincity, etc.

Kelty also noted that the Community-led training that Heidi Schiller worked on developing is underway at VPL for info staff. Wanda said that library staff on the front lines should also have training in the CL model. Anne noted the challenge in spreading the CL model and that some training is better than none. There was some discussion about the content of the training and if it is also about meeting strategic planning goals.

Nicole described BPL's work in having a library presence outside of the library. She has some connections with Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion, with a community-run volunteer coffee shop, with Burnaby Community Services and Burnaby Neighbourhood House. Learning about CL can come from these organizations.

Jorge described a "good bad experience". He visited settlement workers in a school setting and heard about the many barriers they experience with the library.

Janeen has also been tracking stories of why people aren't coming to the library and wondered about how to get all staff on the same page in terms of a low barrier introductory card that's available. She has made good contacts with rural and urban Indigenous populations and has been invited to a lot of health and wellness events.

Mikale has connected with the Learnary on E. Hastings. They are doing programming and need spaces. They will do something with NVCL, and she has suggested connecting to VPL too. She had a positive tour with an on-reserve youth and adult Indigenous school in North Van. She showed them the problematic First Nations collection which generated good discussion and she reflected on the power of the personal invitation. And eventually she may go to their school. There was some discussion about customization of tours and the importance of debriefing after the tour about what they liked or didn't. Anne mentioned a tour she had done in the past where she highlighted skills-based resume building for some young mothers re-entering the workforce, and it was later determined that what they really wanted was "how do I get my 5 year old to read".

Anthea told us about how she's pushing community work into the strategic planning process in Coquitlam. They have used "getting out there" as both a way to gather community input and also a training tool for staff to have experience in actually getting out into the community and getting input. She too has brought back stories about barriers to library use. For example, "alarms go off, so I don't come." Coquitlam is preparing to do some hiring, so she is encouraged by learning about the iSchool class.

Tara shared the news that ORL is opening its first brand new building on Feb. 23rd. It is the Westside Learning Lab, across the bridge from Kelowna on Indigenous land. The focus is on technology, learning and partnerships. There will be a makerspace and a learning classroom with a small set of bays of books, and loans services.

All staff at ORL will complete Ryan Dowd's librarians guide to homelessness online webinar this year. There's a lot of information in it on how background influences current approaches and preferences and how to have more positive

interactions with people who are living without a home. Tara will likely be at BCLA.

Jorge mentioned that there is also a book. Dowd is a social worker and he advocates very openly against having social workers in libraries.

Wanda has read his material and suggests it would be good to have a critical conversation about his work.

Anne made a call for final comments, thoughts, or questions. Jorge called on us to collaborate more effectively. He remarked that “we have catchment areas but patrons don’t”, so we need to develop efficient ways to handle this and he hopes that we can have that conversation later in a more structured way. Anne: It should be a future agenda item.

12. Next meeting: We discussed having the May meeting at the BCLA Conference (May 8,9,10) in order to meet in person with more people than we generally do at our regular Lower Mainland-centric meetings. Could be lunch, right before the keynote, or on the Thursday. Anne and Jorge will figure it out “offline” and report back.

Meeting Adjourned.