

Examining librarians' practices of facilitating learning in makerspaces

Xiaofeng Li ^a

^a Department of Library and Information Science, Pennsylvania Western University, USA

xli@pennwest.edu

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project is to understand how practitioners conceptualize learning and facilitate learning that takes place in makerspaces in public libraries. While research has highlighted the educational benefits of learning through making in makerspaces, library practitioners may lack the specialized knowledge required to support informal learning, including using emerging equipment and software, and scaffolding activities that promote learning (Koh & Abbas, 2016; Li & Todd, 2019). This qualitative study employs individual semi-structured interviews with makerspace managers and facilitators from public libraries to understand their perspectives. Five interviews have been conducted so far, with additional interviews expected. Preliminary data analysis indicates that practitioners perceive learning as predominantly occurring during demonstrations of equipment and software use. Project-based learning is also noted as a key aspect of makerspaces. Practitioners identified challenges associated with facilitating learning in these environments, including limited time available to work with individual patrons. This study's findings will have practical implications for librarians and library science educators to better equip future makerspace practitioners.

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ALISE RESEARCH TAXONOMY TOPICS

Education of Information Professionals; Public libraries; Pedagogy

AUTHOR KEYWORDS

makerspaces; informal learning; project-based learning

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.21900/j.alise.2023.1325>