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The Elephant in the Room: An Analysis of New Academic Librarian Orientations in Scholarly Library & Information Science Journals (2011-2015)

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Background

Academic librarian training for new faculty members is an essential yet tedious effort on the part of all stakeholders (trainer and trainee). An analysis of the large gaps in training experiences demonstrates that a variety of training programs exist for new academic librarians during their orientation. The authors observed how new academic librarian training functions as “the elephant in the room” for experienced librarians and new hires as discussed in major library journals from 2011-2015.

Objectives

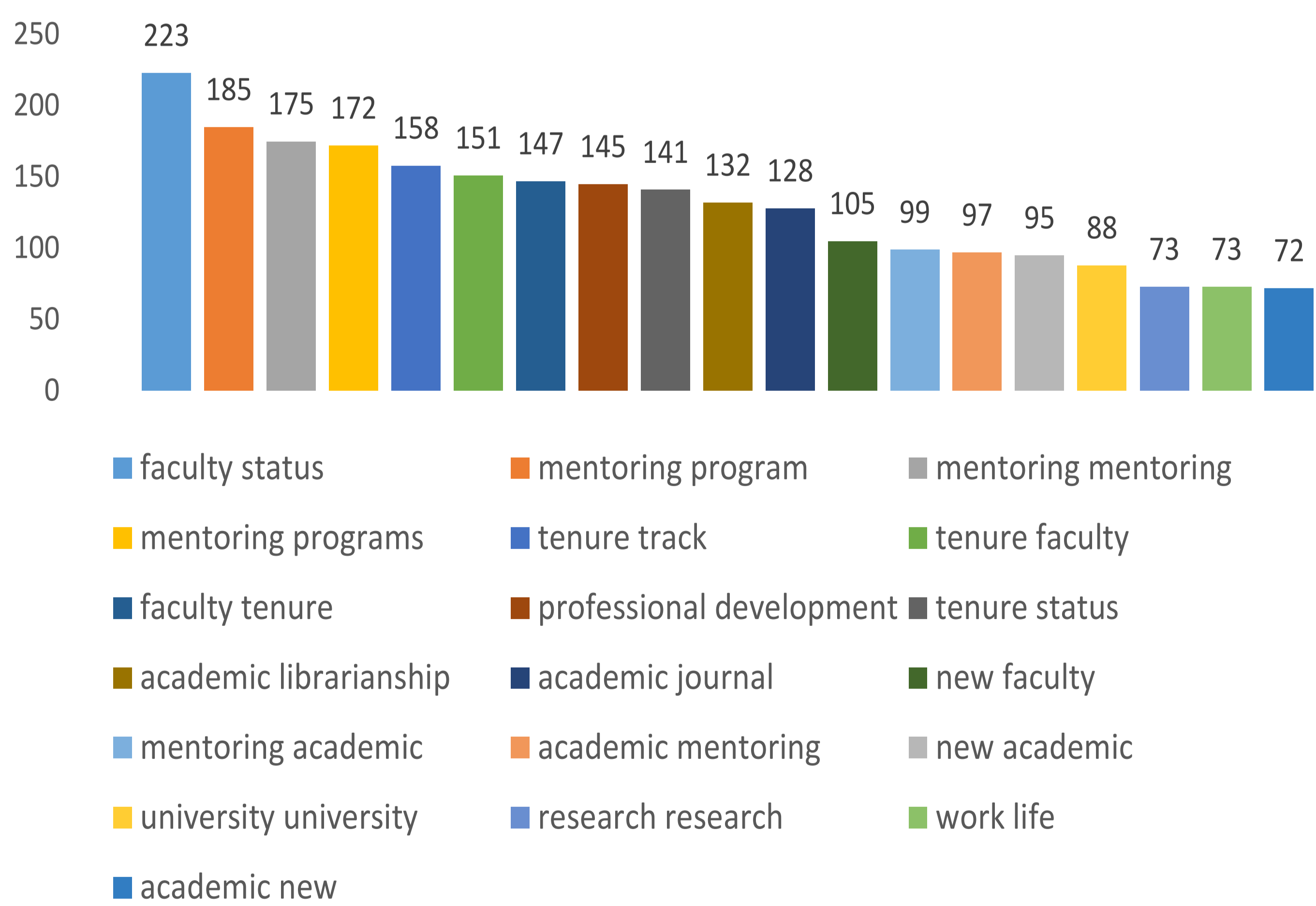
- What constitutes formal vs. informal training programs?
- To what frequency is library terminology used to describe the new academic librarian training process?
- What does the literature reveal about a new hires’ perspectives towards their training process?

Library Terminology Use

The wordcloud below shows the most frequently used words that occur in all literature reviewed for this poster. The Terminology Use chart below shows the collocation for identified words.



Terminology Use

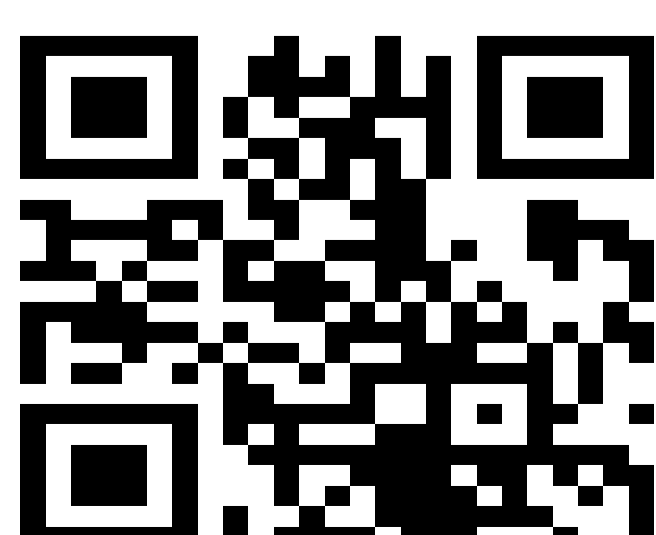


Please note: The above visualizations are made using data analyzed through Voyant Tools. They do not exclude titles, headings, or references. Efforts were made to exclude common words/phrases.

Further Information/Bibliography

To access further information about this topic, to see more Voyant Tools graphics, or to view the bibliography for this poster, please use the QR code on the right, or visit:

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Formal vs. Informal Training Process

A literature review of the orientation processes across scholarly articles and ARL SPEC Kit 323 breaks training into three categories: Formal Training, Informal Training, and a combination of both Formal and Informal.



New Librarian Perspectives

“With academia comes competition, bureaucracy, and assessment...there are a lot of hoops to jump through to get things done.” (Silva, 2015)

“A side benefit of collaborative mentoring programs is that they are not cost-prohibitive; in fact, they can be implemented on a zero budget.” (Keener, Johnson, and Collins, 2012)

“Professional Development and continuing education are important elements for any librarian wishing to advance in the field.” (Mallon, 2014)



“It also has helped me to ask for help or advice because my colleagues really do want me to succeed, and I do not know everything.” (Romanowski, 2015)

Image from: <http://www.dent-artistry.com/images/Man-Thinking-011.png>

Conclusions

Scholarly articles regarding new academic librarian orientations seem to be few and far between, especially in regards to top Library & Information Science Journals. Nixon’s (2014) study proposed that top journals in this field should be broken into three tiers – Tier 1 (ex: *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*), Tier 2 (ex: *International Information and Library Review*), and Tier 3 (ex: *College & Research Libraries News*). For the purposes of this review, articles relating to this poster’s topic fall into all 3 tiers. This review also included articles that are not listed in the tier list.

Formal training versus informal training can be defined as the differences in structure that an orientation takes. Formal training tends to focus on operational and functional goals for new academic librarians. Informal training tends to focus on personal and social goals during the orientation process.

Frequently used words to describe new academic orientation processes include, but are not limited to: orientation, training, new hire, onboarding, and mentoring. It should be noted that “mentoring” is used across scholarly literature for both new librarian orientations and for career guidance from outside parties.

Articles by Journal Tier

