



<http://sanduskyhistory.blogspot.com/2014/05/a-look-back-at-sandusky-library-staff.html>

# From Librarian to Proficient Manager

WebJunction Webinar - November 4, 2014

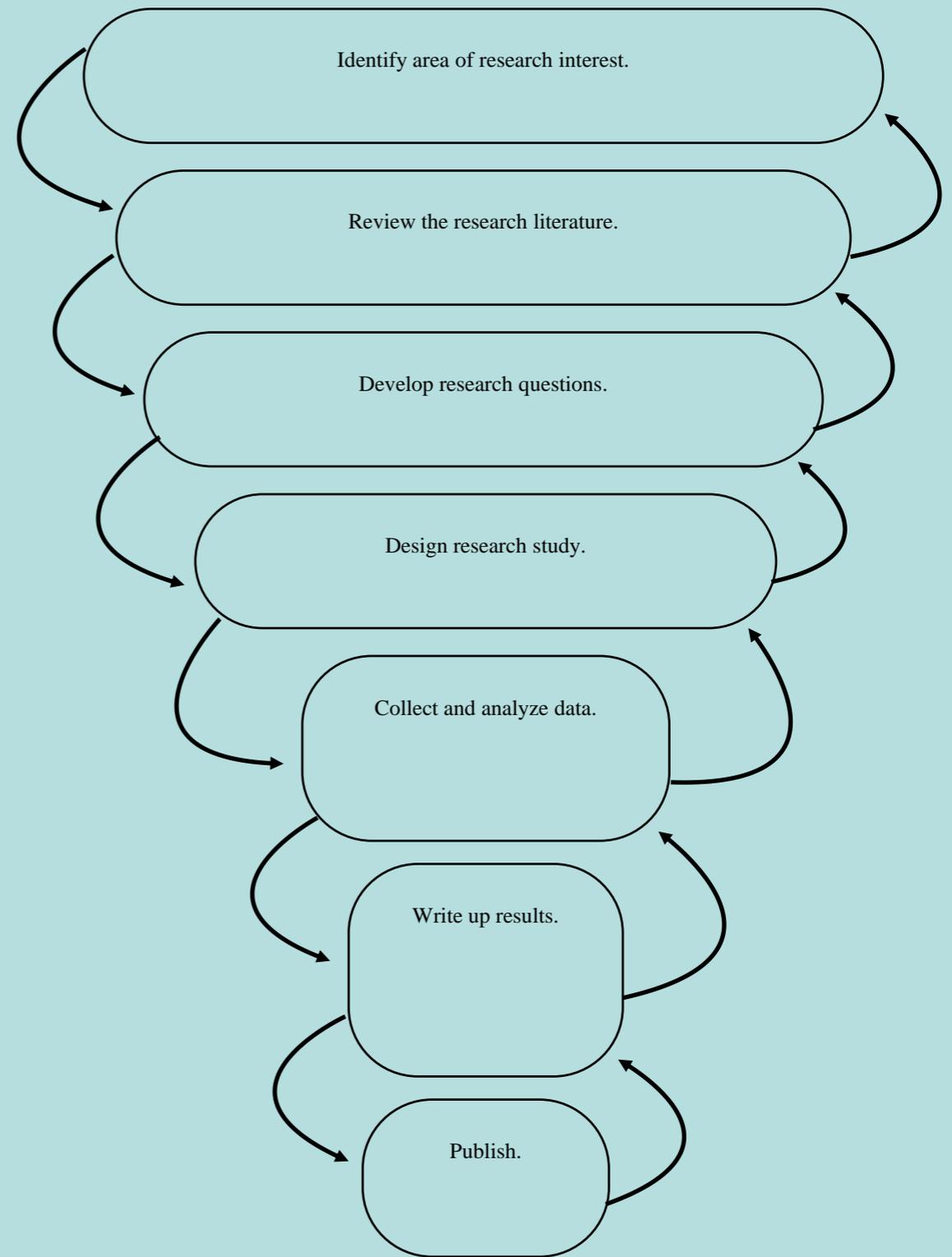
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# Objectives:

- \* How the information was gathered and why it's important (Methodology).
- \* The experiences of the participants, including the tools, processes, and preferences involved in learning and the transformational journey.
- \* The important role of the organization, both formally and informally encouraging and supporting the journey.
- \* The implications of the research practitioners and the role we can play in furthering public library management research.

# The Methodology of Research

It's not as boring as it  
sounds.....



# Who cares about methodology?

- \* As practitioners, we are readers, participants, and objects of studies and methodology:
- \* Explains approach, purpose, and thought process
- \* Reveals bias and potential issues
- \* Shows applicability and quality

# Qualitative vs. Quantitative

- \* Very important debate in academic circles; some importance to practitioners.
- \* Simplified:
  - \* Qualitative: truth is created by each of us and is informed by beliefs, experiences, knowledge.
  - \* Quantitative: truth exists separately and is uncovered through scientific method of testing hypotheses.

# The Research Continuum

- \* Most debate is either/or. Some researchers, however, believe that quantitative and qualitative are on either ends of a continuum.
- \* Choice is dependent on:
  - \* Topic and previous knowledge
  - \* Research questions
- \* In turn, the choice suggests set of research tools to help answer research questions.

Really... Who Cares?

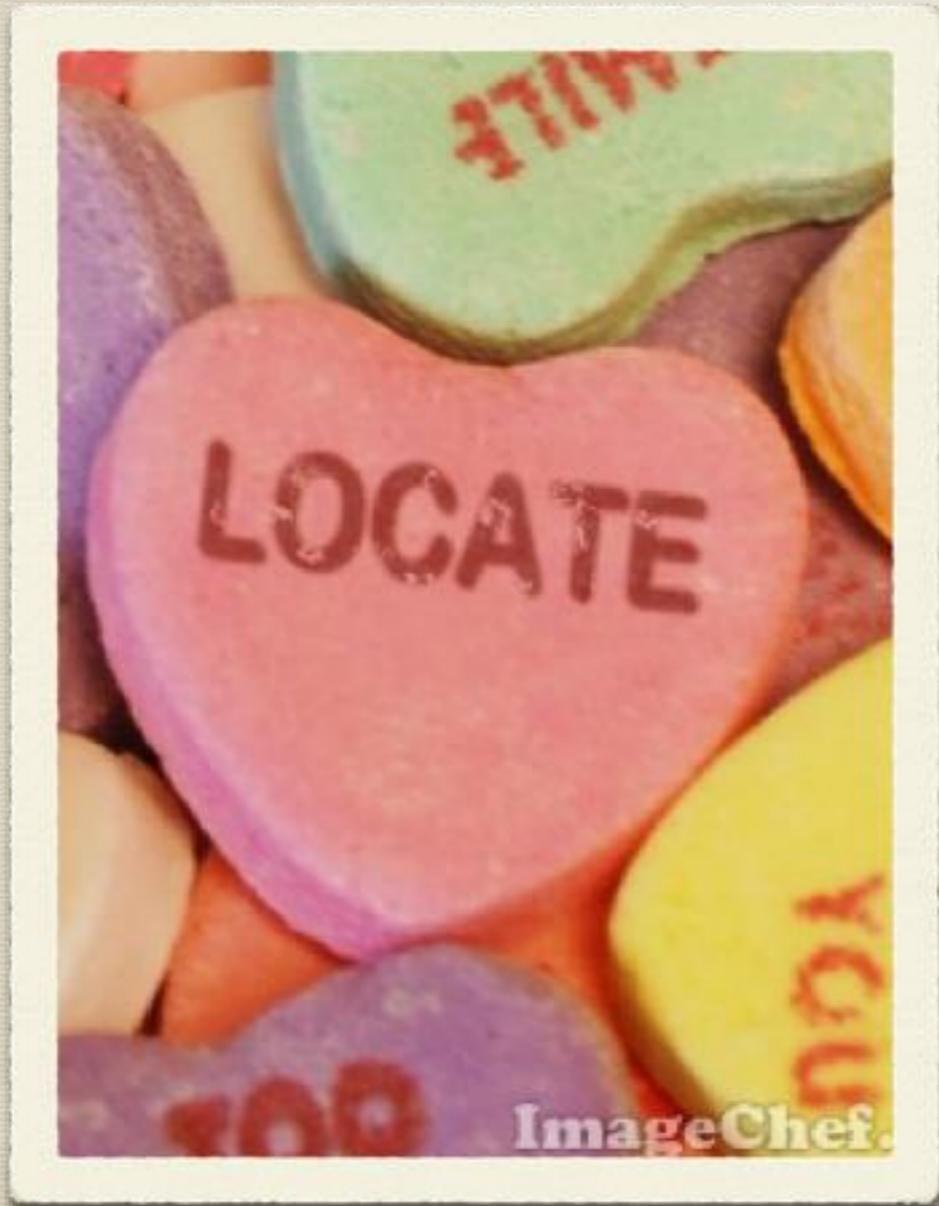
# Field of Library Research

- \* Topics cover all areas of the continuum.
- \* **Qualitative** research is used to explore and describe topics, building knowledge. **Quantitative** research is then used to create and test theories, furthering knowledge.
- \* Without knowledge based in research, we borrow from other fields' research, making **assumptions** about our own.
- \* We need to build our own solid foundation for theory-building.



<http://fdrlibrary.wordpress.com/tag/research/>

# Public Library Management Research



- \* Particularly true in this specific area.
- \* Very little research in general ~ what does often focuses on Directors only.
- \* These are often based on assumptions because no full description of all types of managers' experiences exists.

# Front-Line Public Library Managers

- \* No research explores their “truth,” revealing what those stories are, especially HOW they became managers.
- \* Need to collect lots of stories so we can create a stronger foundation to build our own theories on.
- \* This research seeks to begin that collection of stories and start laying the foundation.

# How Do Public Library Managers Become Proficient?

- \* To describe the phenomenon, this research study is:
  - \* Case Study
  - \* With Embedded Subunits
- \* Tools: Diary Entries and Interviews
- \* Collected data is basically stories on how they each made that transition or are in the process of making that transition.
- \* From the stories, the emerging information focuses on what this process looks like for individuals, groups of individuals, and the organization itself.

# Research Questions

- \* What are the most influential or impactful ways that public library managers gain knowledge, proficiency and/or expertise?
- \* In their view, what are the critical knowledge, skills, and behaviors necessary to succeed at being a public library manager?
- \* How do public library managers view leadership and what role does it play in their work?
- \* How do managers make meaning out of their challenges and experiences and apply the lessons learned?

# Research Findings

What was most common among individuals...



# Previous Experiences

- \* Apprenticeship
- \* Unofficial Manager
- \* Other work and life experiences



<http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/oem2002004172/PP/>

# Strong Influences



- \* Bosses (good and bad) / Other managers as models
- \* Peers/Colleagues
- \* Current Supervisors

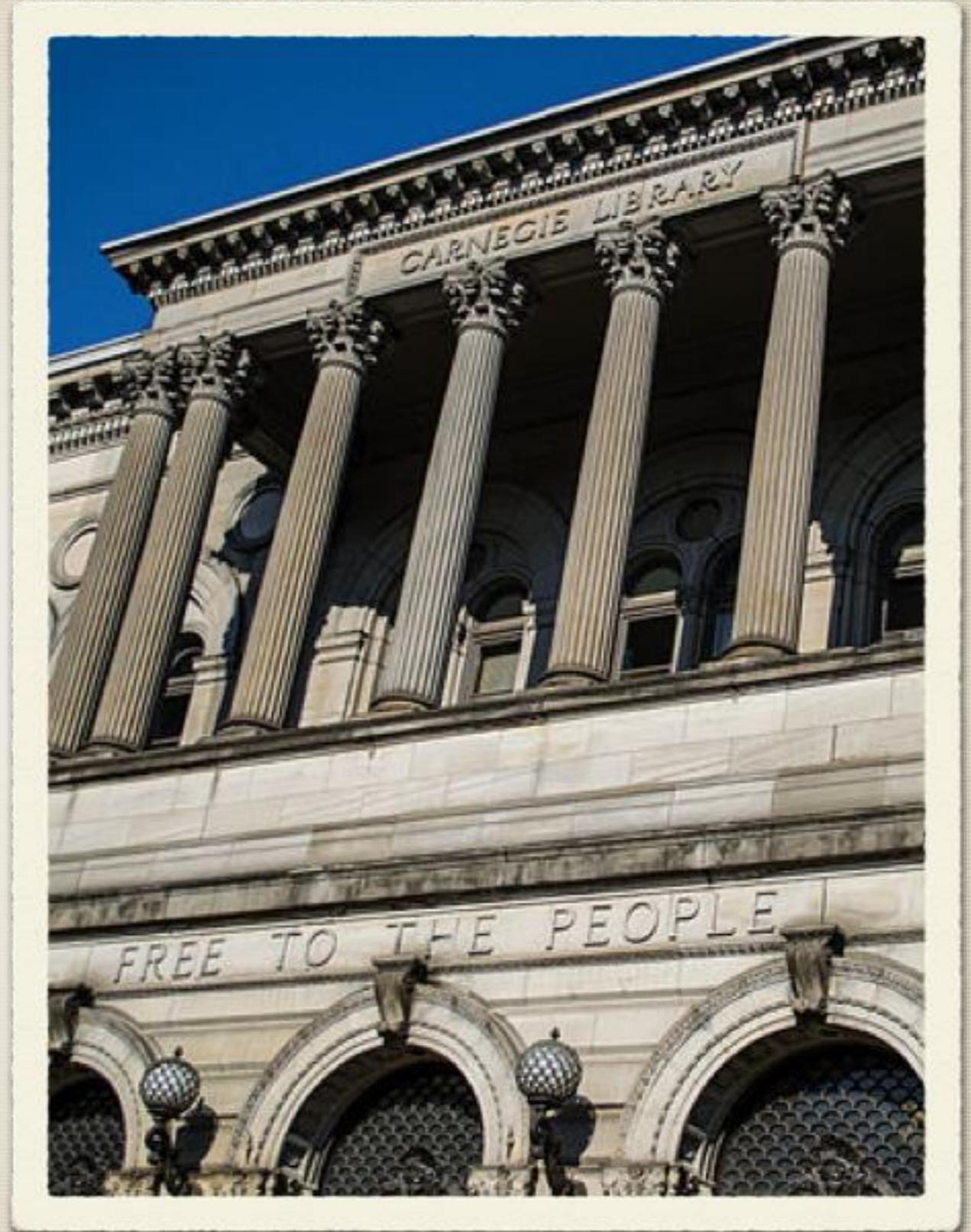
# View of Proficiency

- \* Varying definitions
- \* Motivators
- \* Skills vs. human interactions



# Research Findings

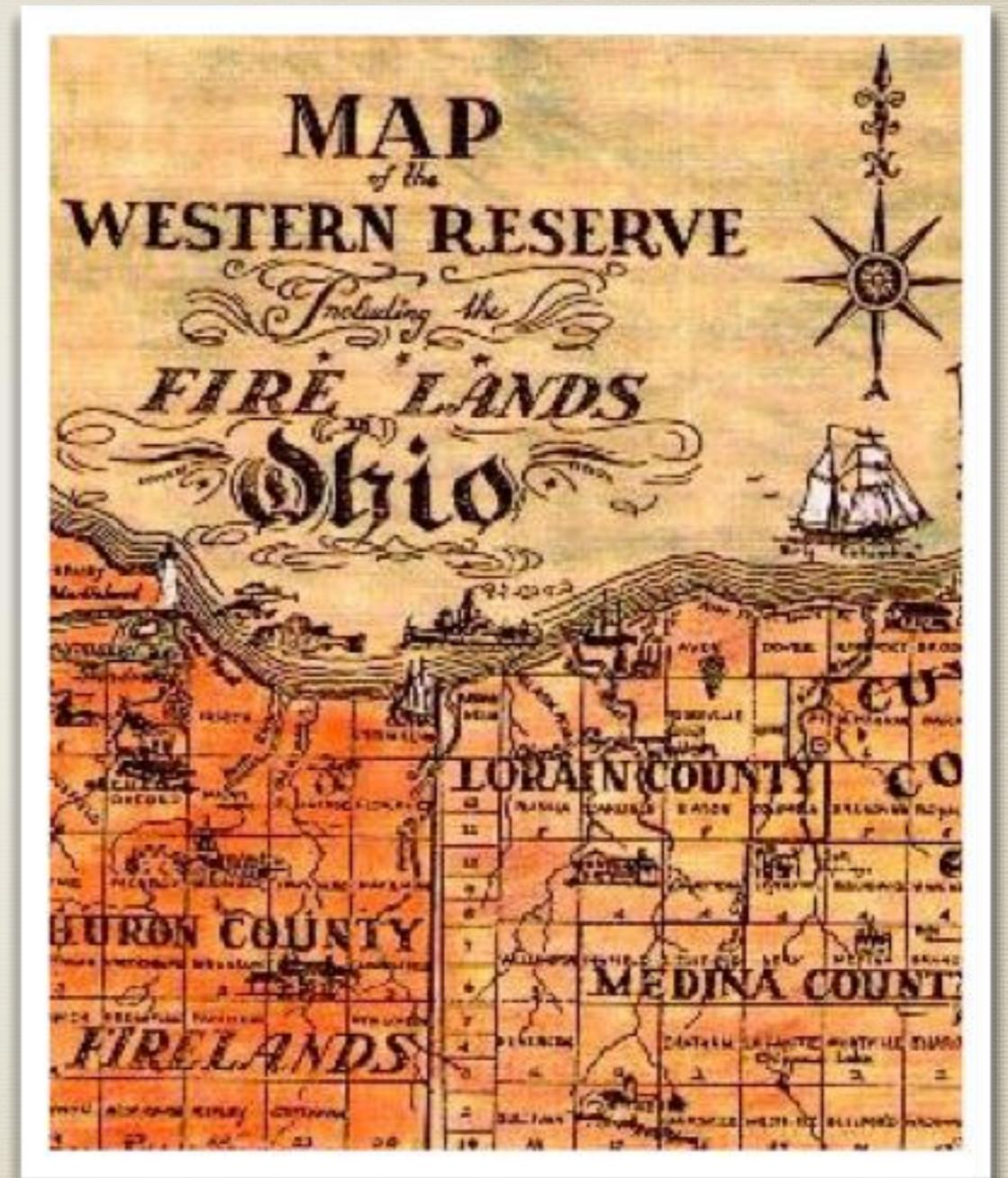
The Case Organization:  
What do managers have  
to learn and how does it  
support that?



[http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carnegie\\_Library\\_of\\_Pittsburgh\\_Main\\_Entrance.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carnegie_Library_of_Pittsburgh_Main_Entrance.jpg)

# Navigating the Organization

- \* The intricacies of a large organization (who does what; how to get things done).
- \* How to get experience and move up (the Senior Librarian position).
- \* Operating more as a team and a system.



# Organization as Institution

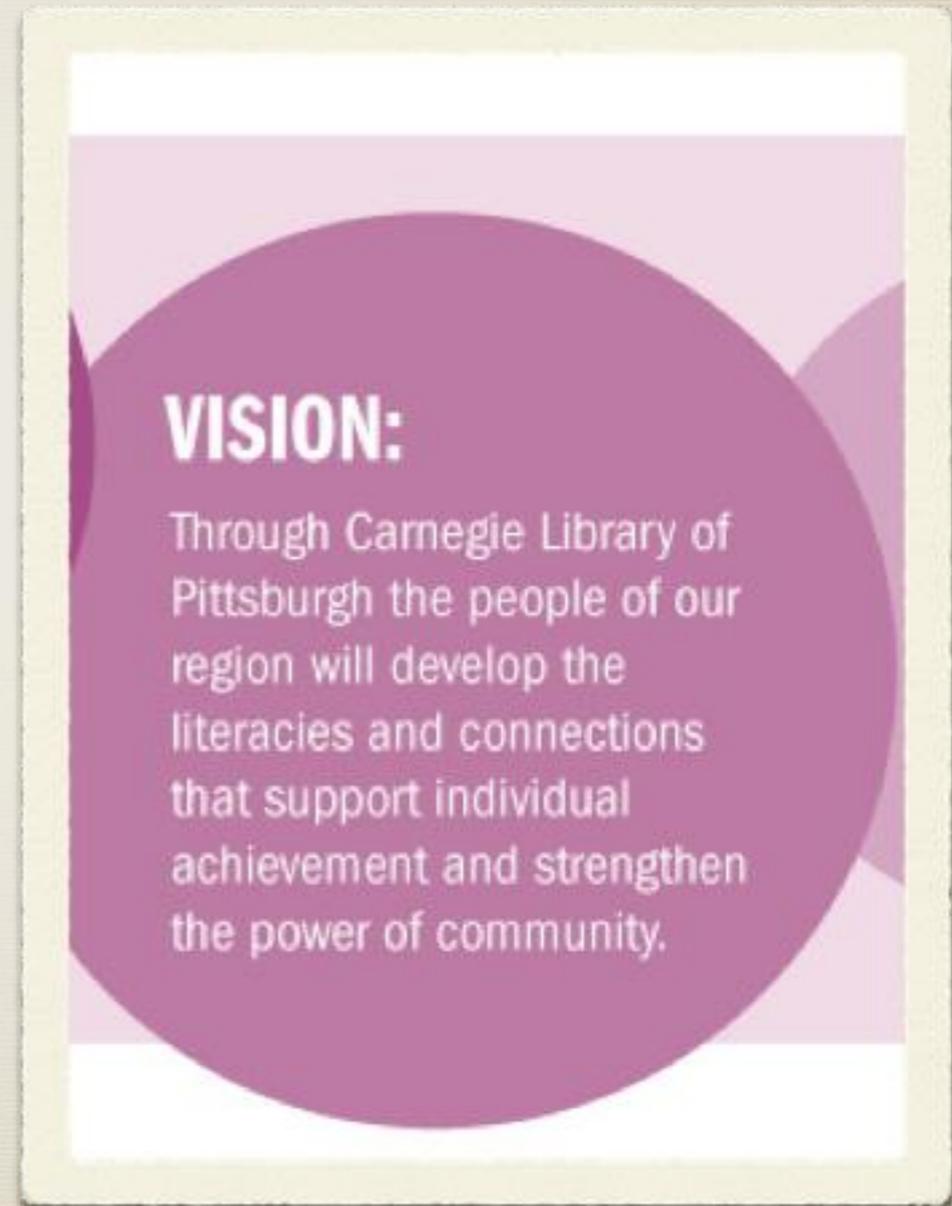


<http://mecanem.com/blog/?p=255>

- \* A changing culture
- \* Everyone has a voice
- \* Performance evaluations
- \* Non-union library
- \* Growing up in the system

# Strategic Plan as Catalyst

- \* Impacts on both
- \* Change in job descriptions and expectations
- \* Strengthening the manager's network



# Next Steps

Interesting  
outcomes...but what  
does it mean for  
researchers and  
practitioners?



<https://weekly.blog.gustavus.edu/2013/11/01/stepping-stones-to-success-students-work-towards-graduate-and-professional-school/>

# Outcomes for Research

- \* Complexity of the public library also emerging from data. Compared to two similar business studies show that some things are the same, but other important findings are different.
- \* Preponderance of data ~ in other words, we need lots and lots of stories, both of individuals and organizations.
- \* More data means more commonalities, from which theories can be built and tested, creating a unique framework specific to public libraries and their management.
- \* Surprise! Case study proves to be potentially more unique instead of the common EveryLibrary.

# Outcomes for Organizations

- \* Find commonalities about how managers learn and then look for ways to support that.
- \* Create a mix of the informal and formal social learning through mentorships/coaching, learning opportunities, and time (and place) to for the network to get together.
- \* Encourage reflective opportunities and practices throughout everything.
- \* Become intentional about developmental assignments and succession planning.

# What's in it for the practitioner?

- \* From these stories, the biggest impact on learning is others ~ and it's proven once again that learning is social.
- \* Check out some great titles, but be sure to read and discuss them with others for a powerful impact: *Managing Transitions* (Bridges) and *Crucial Conversations* (Patterson).
- \* Reexamine all your work relationships and friendships. Many are probably operating as informal mentorships, but looking at them that way may open you up to even more information and learning.

# LIS Education and Professional Associations

- \* This study can begin to inform LIS management courses, certificates of study, and professional continuing education.
- \* Most identified: dealing with staff issues. Most recommended: provide the basics of HR and staffing issues before have to deal with it in the field.  
Information + field experience + practice = proficiency.
- \* Could provide leadership in collecting individual and organizational stories. Also can be the needed bridge between researchers/educators and practitioners.

# What can you do?

- \* Find your own story. Use the questions from this study as prompts ~ and then add your own.
- \* Discover your most powerful and influential vignette, which is the core of your own management style.
- \* Find a partner, workgroup, community of practice/network, or even your organization to uncover more than just your own story for comparison and ideas.
- \* Replicate your own version of the study and share the data ~ necessary to build our knowledge and research foundation.

# Finally....Write!



- \* Start by keeping a reflective diary ~ use the learning guide to get started.
- \* If you do try to replicate any of the study (or create your own), write an article for a journal. Share it!!
- \* Write to me ~ send along your stories and findings!

# Thoughts? Questions?

## Thanks!

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