Towards a Better Understanding of Opportunities for Performance Training within the MLS Curriculum: Issues for Enhancing Education of Children's Librarians

Becca Worthington

Children's Librarian, ImaginOn, Charlotte Mecklenburg Library. bworthington@cmlibrary.org

Children's librarians are often required to be performers. The purpose of the study reported in this paper was to determine the degree to which the Masters of Library Science (MLS) programs accredited by the American Library Association currently incorporate theatrical and performance-based training. A quantitative content analysis was conducted of 219 syllabi from 33 MLS programs to determine which courses included curriculum to support storytelling, puppetry, readers theatre, booktalking, read-alouds, and other performance elements. The results revealed that 93 of the courses currently incorporated one or more of these elements of performance or theatrical training. There was an overall limited degree of inclusion. All of the courses with the highest level of performance training were elective. Based on the results of this study, there may be room to consider whether the performance training offered by LIS Schools in North America is sufficient to equip children's librarians as they enter a field requiring those skills.

Keywords: Storytelling, theatre, content analysis, children's librarianship, LIS Education, performance, young adult readers, LIS curriculum

Introduction

Children and teen librarians in school and public libraries are often required to be performers. This study was an attempt to find out how much active performance training they are receiving within their MLS programs. The usual children's library activities such as storytimes, sing-alongs, and fingerplays require dramatic presence and knowledge. Every booktalk for teenagers, every interactive storytelling program, and every picture book read aloud to a room full of eager faces requires a command of the audience. Studies (for example, Huang & Dolejs, 2007; Moran, 2006; Rinehart, 1999; Tyler & Chard, 2011) support the notion that librarians should take advantage of any available opportunity to include puppetry, readers theatre, and imaginative interaction with, not only early readers, but as an especially effective tool to reach reluctant readers and non-readers of all ages.

This has a strong foundation in library principles. John Dewey, in his 1938 treatise, *Experience and Education*, stressed the profound difference made when children are involved in creating their learning experience (cited in Poe, 2013). The founder of modern librarianship was a vocal constructivist and a proponent of hands-on projects for active involvement and increased motivation (Huang & Dolejs, 2007), which is the primary support for including theatrical elements into the library experience.

Yet, with all the statistical support and case studies that give credence to the ways in which each of these elements of performance and theatre benefit the literary efforts of a children's or teen librarian, and

notwithstanding the universality of these activities in the library sector, much of the training for these performance elements comes on the job rather than in LIS program coursework. This researcher posits that finding librarians with background training in the dramatic arts is rare.

Are today's librarians and school media specialists graduating with children and youth qualifications receiving the education and practice they need to engage in such performance on a regular, if not daily, basis? This study used content analysis to address that question empirically. Syllabi for all 48 ALA accredited MLS programs in the 50 United States LIS Schools currently offering certificates in children's and youth services or School Library Media (SLM) were analyzed to determine the degree to which elements of theatrical and performance training are currently offered.

Importance of the Study

There is a wealth of information on the ways in which theatre elements such as storytelling, puppetry, and readers theatre inform and strengthen both early literacy for elementary schoolers and interest and engagement levels with reluctant readers in middle and high school (Arnold & Colburn, 2012; Bowler, Morris, Cheng, et al, 2012; Haven, 2007; Huang & Dolejs, 2007; Jeffries & Jeffries, 2013; Millin & Rinehart, 1999; Okikawa, 2012; Peck & Virkler, 2006; Poe, 2013; Rozansky & Aagesen, 2010, etc.), but there is currently no research to quantify how much the education and training in those areas comes solely from professional praxis or is taught in advance.

Of equal importance, there has never been a movement in the field of LIS suggesting the purposeful incorporation of theatrical training into children's librarianship education. There are many scholars undertaking research on the value of incorporating various elements of drama into daily work as school and public librarians, but yet little or no suggestion

has been made to revisit program requirements to allow theatre to inform the library education process.

Furthermore, studies of vocational interests and personality patterns as determined by the Vocational Interest Inventory (David, 1992) report that librarians shifted their praxis solidly and suddenly in the early 1990s from "conventional" (conservative, organizer-based) into "artistic" (innovative, creator-based), due to the changing nature of the librarianship industry. This shift indicates that in order to better equip librarians to enter the field, it may be wise for LIS schools to incorporate a greater degree of performance training into the MLS curriculum.

With these available areas for new study in mind, the research reported in this paper set out to address the following research questions:

RQ 1: How many courses included in the 48 ALA-accredited MLS programs in the United States currently offering certificates in children's services, youth services, and school media incorporate one or more element(s) of performance training into their instruction?

RQ 2: Of the existing training, what is the breakdown of instruction (by both course and individual assignment) into storytelling, puppetry work, readers' theatre, booktalking, and other performance-based elements?

RQ 3: What percentage of the total grade do the elements of instruction considered performance training account for?

RQ 4: Of the courses including existing training, what percentage is required versus elective?

Literature Review

Children and teen librarians in public libraries or SLM specialists are encour-

aged by their professional organizations under the various core competencies—"ALSC (Association for Library Service to Children)'s Competencies for Librarians Serving Children in Public Libraries" (American Library Association, 2009), "YALSA (Young Adult Library Services Association)'s Competencies for Librarians Serving Youth" (American Library Association, 2010), and the "National Guidelines for School Library Media Programs of AASL (American Association of School Librarians)" (American Library Association, 2010)—to dedicate their efforts toward creating programming that invites and encourages reading. As this literature review reveals, one of the most effective means of encouraging reading is incorporating theatrical performance into librarian duties.

Storytelling

There is ample support for the power of storytelling in literacy education. Haven (2007) reviewed over 350 research studies from fifteen fields for his study. This work reported that all of these studies supports stories as effective vehicles for motivating, teaching, and communicating information.

Early childhood educators recommend active theatrical storytelling with young children because of its ability to support reading readiness for pre-readers as well as building early foundational literacy skills for early and emergent readers. Literacy and pre-literacy skills specifically assisted by storytelling for early childhood include listening, predicting, sequencing, vocabulary building, observation, oral expression, comprehension, vocabulary, print awareness, phonological awareness, and print motivation skills (Gordh, 2006), among others.

Haven (2007) highlights a primary-grade storytelling program in New Jersey facilitated by Susan Danoff, owner of a nonprofit company that provides repeat, in-class storytelling visits to participating classrooms at inner-city elementary schools. As part of this effort, Danoff had collected over 1,000 Teacher Observation Sheets with feedback on any changes within the classroom that should be credited to the storytelling program. More than 75 percent of the teachers attributed improved verbal, writing, imagining, comprehension, and critical thinking skills for the children to their storytelling involvement.

While "storytime" in public libraries is almost always discontinued beyond the elementary years, research shows that there is great value in practicing storytelling techniques with tweens and teens. Morpurgo (2013) and Moran (2006) stress the importance of expressive, theatrical reading to engage older youth, and there are multiple sources stating the necessity of instructors in literacy fields to model expressive reading that demonstrates how voices can convey meaning as a way to encourage fluency in listening youth (Larkin, 2001; Martinez, Roser, & Strecker, 1998/1999).

Puppetry

Puppets have existed as a teaching tool for nearly 3,000 years in a variety of ways (Price, 2009). Puppetry is practical to institute in a school or public library for several reasons. These include minimal construction, low cost, short rehearsal times (comparative to a full stage production), and broad range of potential visual effects, with few props, no lighting, and no costumes required. Specifically, puppetry has been established to be especially helpful for shy children. Depending on their developmental stage, they will understand that all eyes are on the puppet rather than them, and in the case of shadow puppetry they are literally "hidden" from the audience behind a screen, which tends to be liberating for children who experience any level of performance anxiety (Peck & Virkler, 2006).

There are myriad ways in which puppetry supports literacy and reading skills

for early childhood. Every Child Ready to Read @ your library, an early literacy program founded by the Public Library Association (PLA) and the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), emphasizes five early literacy practices: talking, singing, reading, writing, and playing with children (2015), and puppets can easily (and often do) engage in four of the five through imaginative play. In her book on dramatic storytelling, Dietzel-Glair (2013) promotes puppets as her top-billed prop to use in storytimes, along with flannelboard pieces, which is another form of less animated puppetry. Arnold and Colburn (2012) outline the ways in which puppetry allows children to understand sequencing, print motivation, narrative skills, prediction, print awareness, vocabulary development, and phonological awareness.

Puppetry is not typically considered a popular tool used to engage older youth in literacy; however, there are examples of libraries successfully engaging teens and tweens in puppetry as the performers and puppeteers rather than the audience. One example is the theater arts group of the Patchogue-Medford Library's (PML) Young Adult Department—the PML Players—comprised of volunteer teens that create and perform popular theatrical productions and workshops for the younger children who visit the library (Cohen, 2014).

Readers Theatre

Elizabeth Poe (2013), a retired professor of children and young adult literature, defines readers theatre as "a staged reading of literature that emphasizes the importance of text by using limited action, suggested characterization, no costumes, and no props. Sometimes called minimalist theatre, it is a dramatic form, originally developed for performing in theatrical settings, in which participants read from scripts taken directly from a literary work" (p. 5). The speech and drama fields of oral interpretation and conventional theatre collectively developed readers theatre for

adults after World War II (Moran, 2006), and it has since been popularly adapted for children and teens.

Of particular value in literacy fields is the fact that the emphasis is placed on reading instead of props or costumes (Millin & Rinehart, 1999), and the National Center for Education Statistics (1996) praises readers' theatre for its role in developing fluency, intonation, pauses, syntax, and oral reading speed and accuracy. Jeffries and Jeffries (2013) acknowledge the fact that students' self-reliance is lifted as their reading skills become advanced, applauding readers' theatre as a positive vehicle doing relevant literacy work. Tyler and Chard (2011) recognize the appeal to children in the fact that the collaborative and cooperative peer-based format of engaging with text can be much more exciting than the isolated reading activity.

From a rereading standpoint, it is well documented that rereading directly serves to increase comprehension, accuracy, and rate, and that readers' theatre is a strong motivator to reread texts for all participants, including struggling and reluctant readers (Larkin, 2001; McMaster, 1998; Moran, 2006; Rinehart, 1999; Tyler & Chard, 2011; Uthman, 2002; Worthy & Prater, 2002). Because any readers' theatre production involves not only an initial reading of the text but also several rehearsals, both as a group reading the script out loud and with the actors independently reading their lines over and over for performance familiarity, there is a built-in pattern of rereading the text multiple times to ready oneself for performance (Tyler & Chard, 2011).

There are abundant documented cases of successfully incorporating readers' theatre into both school and public libraries, often to work with dysfluent students, reluctant readers, and generally less proficient readers in particular. Some notable studies include a combined readers' theatre/shadow puppetry program for second graders by Peck and Virkler (2006), an analysis of the effectiveness of readers' theatre on liter-

acy absorption among African-American girls (Jeffries & Jeffries, 2013), a Millin and Rinehart study (1999) to investigate the effects of readers' theatre participation on the motivation and oral reading ability of second-grade Title I reading students, a readers theatre program for family members of lower socio-economic preschool children attending Head Start programs in a large, Midwestern urban city (Huang and Dolejs, 2007), and particular success of readers theatre on reluctant readers in junior high (Tyler & Chard, 2011). These combined studies report increased literacy skills including word recognition, rate of oral reading, sustained oral reading of the same text, increased motivation, and oral reading comprehension from engagement with readers theatre.

Other Performance

There are several other performance elements whose inclusion in youth librarianship is supported by the literature review. One critical element of theatrical performance on the part of librarians that supports and encourages reading is booktalking. Booktalks are brief, dramatic pitches of works meant to intrigue audience members into reading the whole text, and its importance in reaching teens throughout a community is invaluable (Charles, 2005).

Other theatrical engagement is equally valuable. Okikawa (2012) has reported on studies revealing that interactions with musical theatre are specifically powerful for students with visual impairments and other disabilities as a multi-sensory connection to the text and a vehicle for learning.

In a classroom study, Rozansky and Aagesen (2010) used Image Theatre (a type of theatre inspired by Brazilian director Augusto Boal in the 1970s), where students respond to stories they read by creating static sculptures with their bodies and discussing those images, enabling low-income, low-literacy, racially diverse

eighth grade students to demonstrate critical literacy skills.

In Brinda's 2008 study on two groups of sixth-grade reluctant readers in the Pittsburgh area, he found that activities encouraging them to interact closely with text through various stages of theatrical adaptation and performance (costuming, sound mixing, set design, etc.) significantly helped alliterate (electively non-reading) students not only comprehend but enjoy assigned reading. His was one of several reports that encouraged forming external relationships with local theatres to enhance reading and literacy appeal.

Perhaps the most stunning example of partnership between library and theatre is ImaginOn, a combined children's library/children's theater joint venture between the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library (CML) and the Children's Theatre of Charlotte (CTC), who decided to join forces based on a shared mission of bringing stories to life. It is over 100,000 square feet of sensory learning space, with the Park Family Story Lab as its centerpiece. It includes everything from a teen space called "The Loft" to a digital production studio, rehearsal spaces, multiple fully functioning theatres, and children's program areas (Holt 2008).

Whether librarians and literacy professionals choose to engage with theatre by storytelling, readers theatre, puppetry, seeking out partnerships with local community theatres and theatre professionals, hosting theatrical programming, or any other number of possibilities, they should expect that the addition of theatrical experiences will make reading even more enjoyable and attainable. As evidenced by the personality shift of librarians in the SVII and in the literature review, the tools and desire to actively involve children in engaged literacy has increased. MLS programs must respond by incorporating these skills into the training and education they use to prepare librarians of the 21st century. But to what degree do they do this now?

Methodology

The most effective methodology to be used with a study involving the gathering and analysis of written documents is content analysis, specifically quantitative content analysis, a frequently used research method particularly within the field of library and information science. Powell (1997) describes content analysis as "essentially a systematic analysis of the occurrence of words, phrases, concepts, etc. in books, films, and other kinds of materials" (p. 50). In the case of this study, the materials in question are course syllabi, and both words and concepts were being monitored for numerical occurrence. (See Appendix A for a copy of the research instrument used for coding).

Selection of programs meeting the criterion of offering specialization in children, youth or school librarianship was made using the directory of ALA accredited MLS programs published by the American Library Association. The directory is available in four formats, and the researcher selected the online searchable database as specified by ALA to contain the most current information (2015).

Due to some inconsistency between what was listed in the database and what was readily available on various MLS websites, the researcher hand-selected each school website for individual analysis. These were reviewed for clearly advertised certificates and concentrations of study. For the scope of this project, research was limited to MLS programs within the 50 United States. Two of these 50 schools (University of Missouri and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) appeared to offer no certificate in any pursuit of librarianship for children or youth for public or school librarians. The results yielded 48 programs in total, all of which were contacted for participation in the study. Of these 48, 15 were unresponsive by the time of deadline. For the remaining 33 schools, one or more syllabi were either located online or received from the schools in direct response to the request (see Appendix B).

In six locations—Emporia State University, Louisiana State University, University of Hawaii, University of Kentucky, University of Texas at Austin, and Valdosta State University—the syllabi were available online for public viewing. For the 42 remaining schools, the researcher identified and emailed selected faculty members whose descriptions identified them as the chair of a certificate program or affiliated them with any of the predetermined courses. Outreach included a brief overview of the project, a list of course numbers and names, a request for corresponding syllabi, and an offer for any additional syllabi to also be submitted if relevant to the study.

In the case of five schools—East Carolina University, San Jose State University, Syracuse University, University of Michigan, and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill—a secure link to access the syllabi via a private online directory was provided in response to the researcher's request. Four of the 33 participating schools opted not to share syllabi but provided responses via phone or email to sufficiently complete the coding instrument on their behalf. Eighteen schools replied via email providing one or more syllabi for review. A second round of queries was submitted to unresponsive schools four weeks after the original request. Schools that did not respond were marked as noncompliant for the purposes of the study, and only the data received by May 10, 2015 was included for review.

The researcher processed the data manually by cross-referencing each received or located syllabus against a predetermined checklist of theatrically based training elements relevant to children's and teen librarianship. The findings and interpretation of the data are discussed below.

Findings

The purpose of this study was to de-

termine (1) how many courses offered by programs in the sample incorporate one or more element(s) of performance training into their instruction, (2) the percentage of the total course grade for which the performance elements are considered accountable, (3) what the breakdown of instruction (by course and assignment) is into the specific elements of storytelling, puppetry work, readers theatre, booktalking, and other performance work, and finally, (4) what percentages of courses including existing training are elective versus required.

Exploring Responses to Research Question 1

RQ 1: How many courses included in the 48 ALA-accredited MLS programs in the United States currently offering certificates in children's services, youth services, and school media incorporate one or more element(s) of performance training into their instruction?

Of the 50 programs currently accredited within the 50 states, 48 programs in 31 states offered at least one certificate program for working with children and youth. Forty-four offered certificates or programs in School Library Media, and 21 offered specific certificates in children's and/or youth services. Two of the 50 programs did not offer any certificates or certifica-

tions to qualify for this study. This breakdown is shown below in Figure 1.

Among the 48 schools included for analysis, a total of 515 syllabi were considered worthy of requesting, which is an average of 10.7 syllabi per school. From the 515 syllabi requested, a bit less than half, or 219, were received and reviewed. Of the 219 syllabi reviewed, 93 included one or more element of performance training. Therefore, in response to this research question, 93 courses included in the 48 ALA-accredited MLS programs in the United States currently offering certificates in children's services, youth services, and school media revealed incorporation of one or more element(s) of performance training into their instruction (with the expectation that others exist that were not submitted or received).

Exploring Responses to Research Question 2

RQ 2: Of the existing training, what is the breakdown of instruction (by both course and individual assignment) into storytelling, puppetry work, readers' theatre, booktalking, and other performance-based elements?

Of the 219 syllabi reviewed, storytelling is included in 25 courses from 19 Schools; puppetry (including flannelboard projects
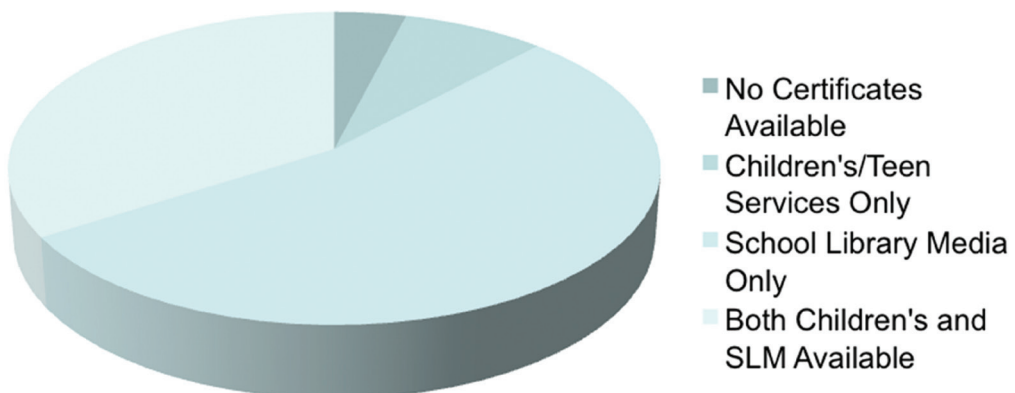
Figure 1. Availability of Certificates.

and shadow puppetry) was included in ten courses from nine Schools; readers theatre was included in four courses from four Schools; booktalking was included in 47 courses from 23 Schools; and read-alouds and other various performance elements (ranging from poetry slams to miming to poetry recitation) were included in 33 courses from 20 Schools with another six syllabi listed as "Maybe" when it seemed that coursework required performance but was unclear what kind. A breakdown can be found in Table 1.

There are a handful of additional elements captured but not included in the study. For example, ten syllabi included one or more element being studied as discussion topics but did not, to the best of the researcher's analytical observations, appear to have any performative action associated on the part of the student (i.e., a class discussion on storytelling but no assignment, or a storytime project with songs and fingerplays submitted only as a written proposal).

On the other end of the spectrum, there were several individual class assignments that were entirely original that identified distinctly as theatrical in nature. Although these items did not fit in with any of the established categories, they should be mentioned. For example, Pratt Institute's LIS 691 included mock interviews. Queens College's LBSCI 739 listed an invested role-play activity on censorship with half of the class playing irate parents and half of the class playing librarians de-

fending the challenged work. University of Alabama's LS 520 required all students to introduce individual puppet personas. Clearly, these classes and instructors felt it necessary and/or beneficial to incorporate engagement with theatrical arts into required course work.

Exploring Responses to Research Question 3

RQ 3: What percentage of the total grade do the elements of instruction considered performance training account for?

Of the 219 syllabi reviewed, 52 attributed one or more specific grade percentages to elements of theatrical performance. How much of a course's grade depended on the performance elements varied greatly. Certainly for the 126 courses of the 219 that do not include any elements of performance training (which comes to 57.53 percent of the total courses reviewed), the percentage is zero. For those courses including performance elements, there was little standardization across courses and schools, even within each individual element.

Eleven of the 25 examined courses that identified the inclusion of a storytelling element attached a grade percentage to it. The variation ranged from anywhere between 100 percent and 70 percent for a full-time Storytelling class down to 10 percent for a single storytelling assignment in

Table 2. Breakdown of Performance Elements.

	Number of Courses (out of 219 reviewed) that Include this Performance Element	Percentage of Courses (out of 219 reviewed) that Include this Performance Element
Booktalking	47	21.46%
Read-alouds	33	15.07%
Storytelling	25	11.42%
Puppetry	10	4.57%
Readers Theatre	4	1.83%

a non-Storytelling course, and averaging 41.64 percent of each class overall.

For the ten classes incorporating puppetry, assignments tended to count for no more than 15 percent of the total course grade, if anything, and were often part of a larger assignment. Few precise grade assignations outside of two flannelboard assignments worth 15 percent each were available.

Readers theatre is less easy to determine, since only one of the four readers theatre assignments listed an assigned grade (35 percent), which is likely significantly higher than the percentage for the other three courses.

Seven of the 35 courses assigned a percentage of the grade to read-alouds and various performance assignments, ranging from 5 percent for a single read-aloud that includes either a rhyme, song, or fingerplay, up to 40 percent for a required 10–12 hours of leading programming for kids outside of class in University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's INLS 735. The average grade weight based on the available sample of seven is 16.43 percent. But given the fact that only seven reported a grade, there is room for fluctuation in the overall percentage.

Twenty-three of the 47 booktalking occurrences had a grade associated with the assignment, but again, there was little consistency, ranging from 5 percent up to 55 percent of the course grade, with the mean score coming to 18.83 percent of the grade.

The short summary of results pertaining to Research Question 3 is that, without participation from the remaining colleges and without the ability to review the outstanding syllabi, it is impossible to make a fully informed proclamation about what percentage of the total grade across the board for which the various elements of performance training instruction are considered. However, extrapolating from the syllabi received and the percentages included, it is reasonable to say that for the majority of the courses reviewed (the aforementioned 57.5 percent), zero percent of the course grade was reliant on any elements of theatrical performance.

Exploring Responses to Research Question 4

RQ 4: Of the courses including existing training, what percentage is required versus elective?

Of the 25 courses currently including storytelling elements: for the children's and youth services track, 12 classes were elective and three were required; for the SLM track, 13 were elective and three were required. Of the ten courses including puppetry elements: for the children's and youth services track, four classes were elective and none were required; for the SLM track, six were elective and two were required. Of the four courses including readers theatre elements: for the children's and youth services track, three were elective and none were required; for the SLM track, one was elective and two were required. Of the 33 courses including read-alouds and performance elements: for the children's and youth services track, 21 were elective and three were required; for the SLM track, 19 were elective and ten were required. Of the 47 courses including booktalking: for the children's and youth services track, 14 were elective and five were required; for the SLM track, 22 were elective and 18 were required. View Table 2 for a general summary.

Overall, from the 93 courses including an element of performance training, a great deal more are elective rather than required. For the children's and youth certificate, across theatrical elements, 11 courses are required and 53 are elective; for the SLM certificate, 35 courses are required and 57 are elective.

Going back to the research instrument as a whole and the 515 requested syllabi, regardless of what was provided and available for review, it was possible to determine that 23 of the 48 total MLS programs

Table 2. General Summary of Findings for 219 Syllabi.

Type of Training	Number of Courses	Number of Schools	Required/Elective Children's and Youth Services	Required/Elective School Library Media
Storytelling	25	19	3/12	3/13
Puppetry	10	9	0/4	2/6
Readers Theatre	4	4	0/3	1/2
Read alouds & Performance	33	19	3/21	18/22
Booktalking	47	23	5/14	18/22

in the study (both those who responded to the researcher's queries and those who did not) listed a full-time Storytelling class in their course catalogs. It was also possible to determine that 100 percent listed Storytelling as an elective rather than a required course for anyone in the MLS program, independent of certificate study. In addition, it should be noted that at least two schools currently "offering" Storytelling to students clarified when asked that it is in fact no longer being offered or that it hasn't been available for years. This means that not a single graduating children, teen, or school librarian in an ALA-accredited program is required to take a Storytelling class.

Similarly, although two of each fall within required courses for certain School Library Media certificates, one must note that zero classes incorporating puppetry or readers theatre are required for any of the children and youth services programs observed. Based on this study, this means that not a single graduating children or teen public librarian in an ALA-accredited program is required to engage in puppetry or readers theatre as part of their LIS education.

Summary and Discussion

Of the 219 syllabi reviewed, 42.5 percent of them (93 courses) included one or more elements of theatrical and performance-based training, which was more than the researcher had originally expected to find. The breakdown of instruction reveals the greatest amount of performance training in the form of booktalking,

followed by read-alouds and other performance, then storytelling, with negligible theatrical instruction in puppetry or readers theatre.

Percentages of grades attributed to the different assignments were not provided with great enough consistency to reveal any commentary on the weight that instructors place (or don't place) on theatrical performances. They varied from five percent of the grade for a three-minute booktalk to assignments being generically lumped into an overall course participation grade to, in the case of some Storytelling courses, being responsible for 100 percent of the grade.

While it is true that the courses with the greatest amount of performance-based training (usually Storytelling) are elective rather than required at every institution, there was less opportunity to make a definitive, overarching statement about all required versus elective courses. A broad hypothesis claiming that no children and youth or SLM librarians are required to receive performance or theatrical training is not proved. There are certain programs in fact that seem to commit heartily across the board to including performance training. But even for these, who is to say what amount is sufficient?

While not included in the results in a statistical capacity, the reviewer also took note of the availability of elements of performance training offered in classes for children versus teen classes. The vast majority of courses that included storytelling, puppetry, and read-alouds were childrens'

courses, which may indicate that there is a lack of overall theatrical and performance training for young adult librarians working with tweens and teens (with the possible exception of booktalking). The researcher found it particularly interesting that the two courses mandating readers' theatre were both courses for early childhood, given the available research for specific ways in which readers theatre is effective as a reading motivator for teens and tweens.

In interpreting the data, it would appear that SLM coursework includes more required performance training than certificates for youth and childrens' services in public libraries. This, however, may not in fact be the case. The original breakdown that a review of the institutions' websites revealed 44 schools offering certificates or programs in School Library Media, and only 21 offered specific certificates in children's and/or youth services. This means that more than double the amount of SLM programs were requested for inclusion than childrens' certificates, and as such the expected rate of return would be much larger for SLM courses. To establish whether one type of certificate participates more actively than the other in performance training would require a more thorough provision and detailed examination of data and a higher rate of participation from SLM programs in particular.

In addition, the researcher proposes that the percentage of courses including theatrical elements—currently measuring 21.5 percent including booktalking, 15.1 percent including read-alouds, 10.5 percent including storytelling, 4.6 percent including puppetry, and 1.8 percent including readers theatre (see Table 3)— would in fact have been either marginally or significantly lower than this data suggests, should it have proven possible to truly collect and analyze 100 percent of the required and elective syllabi for all 48 schools under examination. The primary reason for assuming a lower level of involvement than currently represented is due to three reasons.

First, quite simply, the schools and the professors with a vested interest in including performance elements were much more likely to respond to the query than those with no interest in the study. Second, from a motivation standpoint, those suspecting that their coursework could look favorable in the study may have been more likely to submit than those who know decisively that their coursework would result in a discovery of minimal theatricality. Third, even though syllabi for all required or elective courses within each program were requested, several participating institutions only submitted a single syllabus or a select sample of syllabi for those courses that they identified as including or potentially including performance elements, which means that none of the syllabi from that institution whose score would have resulted in zero performance elements were in fact included in the study. Any and all of those factors could have skewed the

Table 3. Percentage of Courses Including Theatrical Elements.

	Number of Courses (out of 219 reviewed) that Include this Performance Element	Number of Courses (out of 219 reviewed) that Do Not Include this Performance Element	Percentage of Courses (out of 219 reviewed) that Include this Performance Element
Booktalking	47	172	21.46%
Read-alouds	33	186	15.07%
Storytelling	25	194	11.42%
Puppetry	10	209	4.57%
Readers Theatre	4	215	1.83%

data in a more positively theatrical direction than is representative of reality.

Implications

As previously noted, children, youth, and school librarians in the USA are mandated across their associations by listed core competencies (ALSC, YALSA, and AASL, respectively) to seek out opportunities for reading motivation and diverse programming for the widest possible range of children and youth. This study provides evidence that the reviewed theatrical elements, as well as other related elements in library work, serve to entice and motivate readers (especially reluctant readers). One might therefore consider that any opportunity for children and youth librarians for school and public libraries to receive mandated performance training within an individual course curriculum will only serve to benefit them in the long-term.

Ninety-three of the observed courses have found a way to include an element of performance training—either storytelling, puppetry, readers theatre, booktalking, read-alouds, or some other theatrical activity—into their process and may be commended for this effort. While it would not be logical or an efficient use of course time to suggest that every class within the MLS curriculum should include theatrics (technology courses or cataloguing courses, for example), it would certainly be worthwhile to look for every available opportunity within existing children's and youth curriculum to increase the performance requirements.

Specifically for those courses that include a discussion of the value of theatrical elements but do not require performance: why? Class time is of course limited, and there is much to cover within each session, but truly how much more time does it take to conduct a readers' theatre program instead of discussing it or assigning a reading on it. Or, more importantly, how much more effective for the MLS students in the course to experience it first-hand?

Why discuss puppetry or even demonstrate it without providing the students an opportunity and incentive to practice the art themselves while still in training? When research and repeated studies show that readers' theatre is one of the most effective reading motivation tools for reluctant and alliterate tweens and teens, why are only two teen courses teaching it, and both as an optional assignment rather than a required one?

For the childrens' courses in youth and child services certificates, even for those including multiple performance elements, there is always room for more. Instead of faculty providing an option between a booktalk or a book trailer, might they assign both? Instead of a discussion on the value of puppetry, a professor might find it a more engaging and efficient use of class time to bring pens and take fifteen minutes for students to each make a brown paper lunch bag hand puppet. For those students who are terrified of singing—a requirement of all children's storytime programmers of which there was not sufficient syllabi presence to support inclusion in this particular study—might they be asked to participate in (or even lead) a sing-along? Given restrictions of time and the advent of media inclusion in coursework, these assignments can also be done remotely (as some of the online and hybrid classes already do to great success) with students videotaping themselves and uploading their performances to YouTube or their class blog.

From an independent institutional perspective, it might be worth examining whether any Storytelling classes might be moved from elective to required at the institutions at which they are currently offered. Storytelling is a skill with undeniable value to anyone in the field of children's and youth librarianship in the school or public setting (or indeed, readers' advisory and patron-facing librarians for any demographic), and it seems a missed opportunity not to challenge all students—particularly the more introverted ones who may not otherwise seek out a course so heavily based

on performance—to become better at a skill that will do them great service in their long-term and short-term career.

Even for trained performers, the first time that something is done in front of an audience is often the most stressful and panic-inducing. It is also the time when most things go wrong. If the current MLS programs are not conscientiously providing room and space within their course curriculums for multiple real-time performance elements with audience participation and response, within an environment of safe mistakes and gentle coaching, then they are doing a disservice to both the students and the libraries who receive panic-stricken graduates and send them into their first preschool storytime session with crippling stage fright.

In addition, given the results of the SVII and the marked shift of librarians from "conventional" into "artistic" realms, what would happen if ALA-accredited Masters of Library Science programs began to recruit and promote their career paths to graduating seniors with degrees in drama and theatre? University of New Hampshire (2015) offers a Bachelor of Arts in Youth Drama. Bowling Green State University (2015) offers a Bachelor of Arts in Communication specializing in Youth Theatre/Puppetry. James Madison University's theatre department selects students to run a children's theatre in the summer each year called the JMU Children's Theatre Playshop Players (2015). It could be interesting to see what would happen if the field of librarianship made a more concentrated and vested interest in recruiting from these and other colleges with specifically theatrical fields, many of whom have a vested interest in engaging youth and children in the arts through the process of story, and most of whom may not have considered pursuing a career in librarianship.

Conclusion

There are many opportunities and options for incorporating a greater degree of performance or theatrical training into librarianship, and the scope of this relationship reaches far beyond the United States. In the United Kingdom, a theatre touring consortium successfully brings imaginative theatre based on books for children ages 5–11 into public libraries across the East Midlands (Inspire, 2016). The Tokyo Children's Library, which has been open for 70 years, conducts traditional Japanese storytimes for children using the craft of memorized storytelling entirely in place of books (Brown, 2016). In San Lucas Toliman, a rural area of Guatemala, Pueblo a Pueblo brings stories to life at Nueva Providencia Primary School library through the tradition of oral storytelling of Mayan folktales, and La Cumbre Primary School celebrated World Book Day 2017 with skits and puppets shows (Global Giving, 2017). Drama troupes provide some of the most popular programs at several public libraries in Africa, including the Nungua Community Library in Accra and the Kathy Knowles Community Library in Goi (OSU Children's Library Fund, 2017). As a highlight of the Neighbourhood Arts 150 celebration in Ontario, Canada, Rag & Bone Puppet Theatre has been booked for 24 free community events at 19 local libraries that involve reading, puppetry, masks, and additional dramatic elements (Neighbourhood Arts 150, 2017). Alitaptap Storytellers, the national storytelling guild of the Phillippines, was founded with the mission "to instill among children the love of reading and the appreciation of children's literary art through storytelling" and is housed in the National Library of the Philippines, where it hosts all its workshops, shows, and competitions (Alitaptap Storytellers Philippines, 2016). Larrikin Puppets in Australia regularly visits libraries across Brisbane, Logan City, and Moreton Bay hosting puppet shows with dedicated educational content for children and families, and it has performed for library crowds as large as 250 (Larrikin Puppets, 2017). Clearly, the connection between libraries and theatricality is being globally embraced.

Certainly, not every library can be a children's theatre hybrid space like ImaginOn. Nor will every town will have a theatre program for teens as successful as the PML Players. But with the strong, consistent, and proven ways in which theatrics and performance skills—storytelling, puppetry, readers theatre, booktalking, read-alouds, fingerplays, songs, and so much more—work to engage and motivate young readers of all ages, even the smallest step would be one in the right direction.

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Appendix A

Name of Institution
City, State
Library School Website
Certificates Offered

Status of Requested Syllabi (Mark as Requested or Received)	Course #	Course Name	Children's and Youth Services Track (Yes/No)	Required (R) or Effective (E)	School Library Media Track (Yes/No)	Required (R) or Effective (E)	Storytelling (% of total grade, if available)	Puppetry (% of total grade, if available)	Readers Theatre (% of total grade, if available)	Booktalking (% R of total grade, if available)	Presentation (% of total grade, if available)	Other (please specify)
Syllabus 1 (Requested)												
Syllabus 2 (Requested)												
Syllabus 3 (Requested)												
Syllabus 4 (Requested)												
Syllabus 5 (Requested)												
Syllabus 6 (Requested)												
Syllabus 7 (Requested)												
Syllabus 8 (Requested)												
Syllabus 9 (Requested)												
Syllabus 10 (Requested)												

Appendix B

Dear Professor [NAME]:

My name is [REDACTED], and I'm currently in my last semester of my MLS from [COLLEGE REDACTED]. For my thesis project this semester, I am doing a quantitative content analysis of the syllabi from all 45 ALA-accredited MLS programs with certificates in school, children's and/or youth services to establish what performance-based or theatrical training is available and required within. As the faculty contact listed on the website for the Graduate Certificate in Youth Services and Literature, I was hoping to receive your assistance.

I've reviewed your program and course database, and it seems that the [NAME OF COLLEGE]'s [NAME OF MLS PROGRAM] offers a wonderful selection of courses within the certificate. I was hoping that you would send me the syllabus for each one for my review:

• [BULLETED LIST OF ALL COURSES REQUESTED BY COURSE NUMBER AND NAME]

I understand the significance of this ask, and by all means, if you prefer to select only those courses in the program that you suspect may include theatrical elements for children's and youth librarians (booktalking, puppetry, storytelling, readers' theatre, etc.) , I value your judgment and would appreciate receiving them.

Thank you so much in advance for your time and assistance. I would be happy to share my results with you upon completion of my project, if you're interested.

[CONTACT INFORMATION REDACTED]