Thesis Summary

Tentative Title: Examining the Red Thread of Information in Young Children's Hobbies and Interests
Anticipated Date of Proposal Defense: May 2016
Committee: Dr. Ross Todd (Chair), Marie Radford, Vikki Katz, Roger Hart

Summary of Research Project

Conducting research with young children (8 years of age and younger) has been articulated in the research literature as being notoriously difficult. Young children may not have the verbal language (McKechnie, 2000) or reading (Cooper, 2002) abilities to engage in the types of research methods that are typically utilized in the field of library and information science (LIS). Perhaps reflecting these methodological challenges, there exist gaps in the body of literature related to children's information seeking and use. LIS researchers who have worked with children and young adults have focused on children between the ages of nine and eighteen years (Shenton, 2004a; Spink & Heinstrom, 2011), with comparatively little research completed with children eight years of age and younger (exceptions to this include the work of Shenton and colleagues (e.g. Beautyman & Shenton, 2009; Shenton, 2004b; Shenton & Dixon, 2003); Cooper 2002, 2004; and Spink, Danby, Mallan, & Butler, 2010). Additionally, LIS researchers have tended to focus on children's information seeking and use in educational contexts (Case, 2012; Todd, 2003). However, according to Hogan (2005), "we often confuse children's language ability with their general intellectual ability, and... when we attempt to make ourselves understood to children we find them to be more competent than we expected" (p. 34). The dissertation research described here will address these gaps in the literature by examining young children's engagement with information in relation to their hobbies and interests, drawing on research methods utilized in the field of childhood studies.

Writing about information literacy, Bruce, Somerville, Stoodley, and Partridge (2014) state that researchers and practitioners "need to continue to challenge ourselves about how we avoid or limit the influence of existing or dominant understandings of information and learning when researching under-represented communities and contexts" (p. 183). 'Information experience' is a relatively new framework in LIS used to understand how people engage with information, and can be "conceptualized as the way in which people experience or derive meaning from the way in which they engage with information and their lived worlds as they go about their daily life and work" (Bruce, Davis, Hughes, Partridge, & Stoodley, 2014, p. 6). This framework allows for the conceptualizations of information and information sources of the population under study to be the focus of the research, rather than the researcher's conceptualizations.

Children's engagement with information in their everyday lives remains a largely understudied area in LIS. The dissertation research proposed here seeks to address these gaps in the current literature by exploring the ways in which children conceptualize and engage with

information related to their hobbies and interests. By gaining an understanding of the ways in which children seek and use information in order to satisfy their own curiosities, parents, librarians, teachers, and others who work with children will be better able to assist them in their pursuit of information, not only in relation to their own interests but also in more formal learning environments such as the classroom.

My proposed dissertation research will seek to address the following questions:

1. What is experienced as informing to young children when engaged in their hobbies and interests?
2. How is this information related to their hobbies and interests experienced by young children?

Much work has been done in the field of childhood studies to find new and creative ways of engaging young children in the research process. James, Jenks, and Prout (1998), leading researchers in this field, suggest the use of what they describe as "task-centred activities" (p. 190) as research methods better able to elicit children's opinions/thoughts than standard interviews, questionnaires, and other traditional research methods. These task-centred activities can take any number of forms, including drawings, mapping, photography, games, drama and role play (for further discussion regarding the use of creative methods in research with children, see also Darbyshire, MacDougall, & Schiller, 2005; Fargas-Malet, McSherry, Larkin, & Robinson, 2010; and Veale, 2005). This type of research approach not only allows for children to communicate in ways more suited to their age and abilities, but also provides for an engaging experience for the child participants (Darbyshire et al., 2005; Hill, 2006; Leitch, 2008). In addition, childhood studies researchers often incorporate multiple methods into their research projects; according to Garbarino and Stott (1992), "the more sources of information an adult has about a child, the more likely that adult is to receive the child's messages properly" (p. 15).

Following the suggestions of these and other authors, the proposed dissertation research will make use of several task-centered activities within interviews with children between the ages of 4 and 8 years. This proposed research will utilize the task-centred activities of drawing, mapping and photography. While a full discussion of the proposed research methods is outside of the scope of this research statement, in each of the three methods listed above, the materials created by the children will be used as the basis for semi-structured interviews with the children about the ways in which the people, places, and things captured in the drawings, maps, and photographs relate to their interests and related information activities. The data collected during these interviews will be analyzed for common themes in representations of information sources, information seeking, use, and sharing, as well as the affective components related to their engagement with information using the constant comparison method (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

At the doctoral workshop, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss the methodological challenges posed by both the population under study and the methods of data collection and analysis. I would also like to discuss the challenges associated with working with the emerging framework of information experience.

References

Beautyman, W., & Shenton, A. K. (2009). When does an academic information need stimulate a school-inspired information want*? Journal of Librarianship & Information Science, 41*(2), 67-80.

Bruce, C., Davis, K., Hughes, H., Partridge, H., & Stoodley, I. (Eds.). (2014). *Information experience: Approaches to theory and practice*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group.

Bruce, C., Somerville, M.M., Stoodley, I., & Partridge, H. (2014). Diversifying information literacy research: An informed learning perspective. In C. Bruce, K. Davis, H. Hughes, H. Partridge, & I. Stoodley (Eds.), *Information experience: Approaches to theory and practice* (pp. 169-186). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group.

Case, D. O. (2012). *Looking for information: A survey of research on information seeking, needs, and behavior* (3rd ed.). Bingley, UK: Emerald Publishing.

Cooper, L. Z. (2002). A case study of information-seeking behavior in 7-year-old children in a semistructured situation. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 53*(11), 904 – 922.

Cooper, L. Z. (2004). The socialization of information behaviour: A case study of cognitive categories for library information. *Library Quarterly, 74*(3), 299-336.

Darbyshire, P., MacDougall, C., & Schiller, W. (2005). Multiple methods in qualitative research with children: More insight or just more? *Qualitative Research, 5*(4), 417–436.

Fargas-Malet, M., McSherry, D., Larkin, E., & Robinson, C. (2010). Research with children: Methodological issues and innovative techniques. *Journal of Early Childhood Research, 8*(2), 175-192.

Garbarino, J., & Stott, F.M. (1992). *What children can tell us: Eliciting, interpreting, and evaluating critical information from children*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Hill, M. (2006). Children's voices on ways of having a voice: Children's and young people's perspectives on methods used in research and consultation. *Childhood, 13*(1), 69-89.

Hogan, D. (2005). Researching 'the child' in developmental psychology. In S. Greene & D. Hogan (Eds.), *Researching children's experience* (pp. 22-41). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage

James, A., Jenks, C., & Prout, A. (1998). *Theorizing childhood*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.

Leitch, R. (2008). Creatively researching children's narratives through images and drawing. In P. Thomson (Ed.), *Doing visual research with children and young people* (pp. 37 - 58). New York: Routledge.

McKechnie, L. (2000). Ethnographic observation of preschool children. *Library & Information Science Research, 22*(1), 61-76.

Miles, M.B., & Huberman, M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Shenton, A. K. (2004a). Research into young people's information-seeking: Perspectives and methods. *Aslib Proceedings, 56*(4), 243 – 254.

Shenton, A. K. (2004b). Young people's use of paper serials: The results of a recent research project in England. *Serials Librarian, 47*(3), 45-57.

Shenton, A. K., & Dixon, P. (2003). Youngsters' use of other people as an information-seeking method. *Journal Of Librarianship & Information Science, 35*(4), 219-233.

Spink, A., Danby, S., Mallan, K., & Butler, C. (2010). Exploring young children's web searching and technoliteracy. *Journal of Documentation, 66*(2), 191 - 206.

Spink, A., & Heinstrom, J. (2011). Information behavior development in early childhood. In A. Spink & J. Heinstrom (Eds.), *New directions in information behavior*. Bingley, UK: Emerald Group Publishing.

Todd, R. (2003). Adolescents of the information age: Patterns of information seeking and use, and implications for information professionals. *School Libraries Worldwide, 9*(2), 27-46.

Veale, A. (2005). Creative methodologies in participatory research with children. In S. Greene & D. Hogan (Eds.), *Researching children's experience* (pp. 253-272). Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Sarah C. Barriage
4849 BPO Way • Piscataway, NJ 08854
(732) 407-3307 • sarah.barriage@rutgers.edu

Education

PhD, Library and Information Science   2013 - present
Rutgers University
New Brunswick, NJ

Master of Library and Information Science   2010 - 2011
University of Western Ontario
London, ON

Bachelor of Arts (Honours), Psychology   2005 - 2009
Queen's University
Kingston, ON

Publications

Journal Articles (Peer Reviewed)

Barriage, S. (in preparation). "I know it, but I don't know the word to call it" (Gavin, age 3): Exploring the information experience of young children in a daycare setting. To be submitted to *Library & Information Science Research*.

Barriage, S. (submitted for initial review). "Talk, talk and more talk": Parental perceptions of young children's information practices related to their hobbies and interests. Submitted to *Information Research*.

Book Chapters

McEachreon, P., & **Barriage, S**. (forthcoming). Poverty and the public library: How Canadian libraries are serving the economically challenged. In E. S. Estep & N. F. Enright (Eds.), *Class and librarianship: Essays at the intersection of information, labor and capital*. Library Juice Press.

Barriage, S. (2016). The role of the union in promoting social justice. In U. Gorham, N. G. Taylor, & P. T. Jaegar (Eds.), *Perspectives on libraries as institutions of human rights and social justice* (pp. 231-243). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group.

Other Publications

Barriage, S. (forthcoming). 'A seat at the table': 2015 union review. *Progressive Librarian*.

Barriage, S. (2015). Showing solidarity: 2014 union review. *Progressive Librarian*, (43), 102-114.

Barriage, S. (2014). 'The union can't sit idly by:' 2013 union review. *Progressive Librarian*, (42), 123-136.

Barriage, S. (2013). 'Library workers will not be shushed': 2012 union review. *Progressive Librarian,* (41), 86-97.

McEachreon, P., & **Barriage, S**. (2012). Cultivating spaces for critical dialogue and collaborative action: The Progressive Librarians Guild - London, Ontario Chapter. *OLA Access,* 18(3), 17.

McEachreon, P., & **Barriage, S**. (2012). Improving social justice at the University of Western Ontario: Special collections at the Pride Library. *OLA Access,* 18(3), 22-23.

Barriage, S. (2012). Comic books, graphic novels, and pride at Lightning Strikes 2012. *Inside OCULA,* 46(5), 5.

Conference Presentations

Published Conference Proceedings (Peer-Reviewed)

Barriage, S., & Searles, D. (2015, November). *Astronauts and sugar beets: Young girls' information seeking in family interactions*. Paper presented at the 78th Association for Information Science & Technology Annual Meeting, St Louis, MO.

Conference Presentations

Barriage, S., & Searles, D. (submitted). *Young children's spontaneous information seeking in family interactions*. Paper submitted to VII Conference on Childhood Studies, Turku, Finland.

Morales, M., & **Barriage, S**. (2016, June). *Readability of informed consent forms: Analysis and recommendations for development of consent forms for use with communities with limited or low literacy*. Poster to be presented at the Canadian Association of Information Science Conference, Calgary, AB.

Barriage, S., & Searles, D. (2016, April). *"Are you getting the video of me?": Examining children's orientations to the video camera in recordings of family interactions.* Paper to be presented at the 2016 Graduate Student Conference in Childhood Studies, Camden, NJ.

Barriage, S. (2016, April). *Exploring young children's information experience: Methodological inspiration from the field of childhood studies*. Paper to be presented at the 2016 Graduate Student Conference in Childhood Studies, Camden, NJ.

Barriage, S. (2016, March). *Using child-centered methods to explore young children's information experience.* Poster to be presented at iConference 2016, Philadelphia, PA.

Searles, D.K., & **Barriage, S.** (2015, November). *"What does that mean?": Repairing young children's word (non)understanding in family interactions.* Paper presented at the 101st National Communication Annual Conference, Las Vegas, NV.

Barriage, S., & Searles, D. (2015, October). *"What does that mean?": Repairing young children's word (non)understanding in family interactions*. Poster presented at International Max Planck Research School Workshop on Perspectives on the Ontogeny of Mutual Understanding, Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

Searles, D., & **Barriage, S.** (2015, July). *"Daddy define inspired": Word definitions in family interactions*. Panel presented at the 14th International Pragmatics Conference, Antwerp, Belgium.

Barriage, S. (2014, November). *Parental perceptions of young children's information behavior related to free-time activities*. Poster presented at the 77th Association for Information Science & Technology Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA.

Barriage, S., & McEachreon, P. (2014, June). *Advocacy our way: A look at how Canadian public libraries are serving the economically challenged*. Presentation at the Atlantic Provinces Library Association Conference, Moncton, NB.

Barriage, S., & McEachreon, P. (2014, June). *The Closet and Queer Graphica research collections*. Panel presentation at the Atlantic Provinces Library Association Conference, Moncton, NB.

Goebel, N., & **Barriage, S**. (2013, July). *Considering the impact of a human library on lives and undergraduate research*. Poster presented at Evidence Based Library and Information Practice Conference, Saskatoon, SK.

Goebel, N., & **Barriage, S.** (2013, June). *Measuring impact: Considering qualitative and quantitative feedback from human library books and readers*. Paper presented at International Conference on Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries, Rome, Italy.

Barriage, S., & McEachreon, P. (2012, October). *Special collections at the Pride Library: The Closet Collection and The Queer Graphica Collection.* Poster presented at Progressive Librarians Guild Symposium: Organize and Assemble II, Edmonton, AB.

Barriage, S., & McEachreon, P. (2012, June). *Special collections at the Pride Library: The Closet Collection and The Queer Graphica Collection.* Poster presented at Canadian Library Association National Conference and Trade Show, Ottawa, ON.

Barriage, S. (2012, February). *Comic books, graphic novels, and pride: Marginalized collections in the academic library*. OCULA Lightning Strikes presentation at Ontario Library Association Super Conference, Toronto, ON, February 2012.

D'Elia, M.J., Oldham, R., & **Barriage, S**. (2011, April). *Innovation boot camp*. Workshop presented at Western New York/Ontario (WNY/O) ACRL Chapter Spring Conference, Jordan, ON.

Research Experience

Research Assistant   2014 - 2015
Principal researcher: Dr. Rebecca Reynolds, School of Communication & Information, Rutgers University
Analyzed video data regarding middle schoolers' collaborative inquiry and resource use.

Data Collection Assistant   2010 – 2011
Principal researcher: Dr. Victoria Rubin, Faculty of Information & Media Studies, University of Western Ontario
Collected, organized, and analyzed information regarding innovation rhetoric and social media use as represented on library websites.

Research Assistant   2007 – 2009
Principal researcher: Dr. Jill Jacobson, Department of Psychology, Queen's University
Recruited and scheduled participants, administered various forms of testing to participants, acted as a confederate, coded data, and performed data entry.

Teaching Experience

Teaching Assistant, Rutgers University
Assisted in undergraduate course "Information Technology and Informatics"   F 2015, Sp. 2016
Assisted in undergraduate course "Retrieving and Evaluating Electronic Information"   Sp. 2015
Assisted in undergraduate course "Gender and Technology"   F 2014

Grader, Rutgers University
Graded student submissions for undergraduate course "IT and Learning"   Sp. 2016

Work Experience

Public Services Librarian   March 2012 – June 2013
Augustana Campus Library, University of Alberta
Provided reference services to undergraduate students and faculty, planned and delivered information literacy one-shot sessions across disciplines, collaborated on collection development, established and maintained library's social media presence, updated and

maintained LibGuides and library webpages, trained library staff members, and participated in other special projects as needed.

Library Assistant September – December 2011
Pride Library, University of Western Ontario
Provided reference services to users of this campus resource centre and participated in special projects as needed, including processing and cataloguing a special collection of comic books and graphic novels.

Student Assistant August – December 2011
Graduate Resource Centre, University of Western Ontario
Provided reference services and basic computer support to graduate students and faculty, and participated in other special projects as needed.

Librarian Intern, Learning & Curriculum Support March – June 2011
McLaughlin Library, University of Guelph
Provided reference services to students, staff and faculty, conducted library tours, participated in library instruction sessions, conducted background research on digital learning objects, and provided assistance in other special projects including the development of an information literacy service delivery model.

Awards

Outstanding Practicum Project Award Spring 2015

School of Communication & Information Doctoral Fellowship - $25,000/annum 2013-2014

OCULA Student Award 2012
Presented to the winner of the Ontario College and University Library Association Lightning Strikes session at OLA Super Conference, as decided by audience votes.

Professional Memberships and Activity

ASIS&T, Member 2014 – present

Progressive Librarians Guild, Member 2011 - present
    Coordinating Committee Member December 2012 - present
    Co-Founder, London, ON Chapter September 2011

Ontario Library Association, Member 2011 - present

Contact Details

Participant

Sarah Barriage
PhD Candidate
School of Communication & Information
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
4 Huntington Street, New Brunswick , New Jersey USA 08901
Tel: (732) 407-3307
Email: sarah.barriage@rutgers.edu

Advisor

Dr. Ross J. Todd
Associate Professor and Chair, Department of Library and Information Science
School of Communication & Information
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
4 Huntington Street, New Brunswick , New Jersey USA 08901
Tel: (848) 932-7602, Fax: (732) 932-6916
Email: rtodd@rutgers.edu