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Abstract: When emerging professionals start working in archival institutions, libraries and museums they bring knowledge and skills gained through internships, formal study, volunteer activities and previous work experience. They learn new processes quickly, are passionate about working with holdings or collections and are keen to build their knowledge. They gain exposure to the different disciplines that are reflected in the roles of archival institutions, libraries and museums as they build their professional identity and consider future career directions. What else do they need? A research study about the experiences of a group of individuals embarking on first or subsequent careers and starting new positions in collecting institutions found that relationships were an essential component in developing their skills and knowledge and planning their future directions. The article would be of interest to: students looking ahead to working in an archives, library or museum and exploring career paths; supervisors and mentors who work with emerging professionals; professional associations and communities of practice; and educators who have a role in developing curriculum in educational or workplace contexts.

Introduction
A research study exploring the experiences and expectations of individuals starting new positions in archival institutions, libraries and museums found that multiple relationships based on trust and respect were key ingredients in their initial adjustment, sense of place and opportunity to continue to learn. Relationships were central to how they adjusted to their new
environments, how they applied their knowledge and experience and how they navigated options for development and specialisation. There was no one relationship, formal or otherwise, from which they learned during those early stages; they learnt most from those in whom they trusted and respected whether they were supervisors, mentors, teams, managers or colleagues.

The archival institutions, libraries and museums that provided the workplace context of the study were located in Canberra, Australia. They were public sector institutions, but the discussion in the literature and experiences of the individuals in the study indicated that there was nothing peculiar about the public sector context in how relationships developed during initial periods of employment. For this paper, the workplace settings are referred to as ‘collecting institutions’ and could encompass multiple disciplines or domains of knowledge such as archives administration, curatorship, heritage management, information management, librarianship and museum studies. The research participants, as new employees starting their first, second or third careers, were exposed to these diverse disciplines, and several did change their areas of interest over the two years, even within the same institution. Examples of this shift in interest included: from curator roles to archives administration; from reference services to curator roles; or from arranging and describing collections to developing public programs. Shifts in interest were supported through further study or in-house professional development or a combination of both. It was therefore important that the study looked broadly across multiple disciplines that form part of the information sector. The literature and the evidence from the research study indicated that collecting institutions in the public and private domains could have archival holdings, museum objects and library collections (Bak & Armstrong, 2008; The Museum of Chinese Australian History, 2011; State Library of Victoria, 2009). There was, therefore, potential for an individual to be exposed to different disciplines.

These synergies, overlaps and differences of the diverse disciplines engaged within collecting institutions and the wider information sector were well documented in the literature and provided a rich backdrop to the working environments of the research participants (Apostle & Raymond, 1997; Birtley & Bullock, 2008; Coombes, 2009; Cox, 2005; Currall & Moss, 2008; Currall, Moss, & Stuart, 2004; Marty, 2008; Procter, 2005, 2007; Yakel, 2007). The research study, however, did not debate the characteristics of different kinds of collections or critique the relationships between the disciplines that support the roles of collecting institutions.

Sixteen individuals participated in the research study. They were at various career stages: first career ever after finishing formal qualifications; a second career; or continuation of the same career but starting a new position in a different collecting institution. All the participants could be regarded as emerging professionals, as they were all embarking on new challenges, new directions, and building new knowledge. The criteria for their involvement included: having completed formal qualifications; starting a new position in a different collecting institution; and working with a collection or holdings in some way. The reason for the criterion associated with a new position and different collecting institution was that the research sought to explore orientation and induction programs from an individual perspective to complement studies in the literature that focused on program implementation. Also connected with starting new positions were experiences during internships and as student volunteers, so these were also explored as part of the overall study. While not able to be addressed in this article, the author has noted elsewhere about how internships and student
volunteer work provided opportunities to build relationships that continued once individuals started working (Hoy, 2011).

The participants shared a number of characteristics even though they were at different career stages, had undertaken a wide variety of formal educational qualifications and worked in different collecting institutions. All the participants had deliberately chosen to work in the archives, heritage, library or museum fields. Most of the participants (15/16) had already experienced working in 2-3 different collecting institutions through internships, volunteer or casual work, before starting their new full-time positions. About half of the participants had to move cities to take up new positions, so were developing new social as well as work-based relationships. Most were female (14/16), but while this was a limitation, it followed trends in other studies in the information sector (Duff, Cherry, & Singh, 2006; Hallam, 2008b; Society of American Archivists: Principal consultant V. Walch, 2006). Their educational qualifications were undertaken at vocational, undergraduate and postgraduate levels in several countries, as well as Australia and most had internships as part of those qualifications. The fields of study the participants undertook included combinations of archives administration, art history, audio-visual archives, fine arts, heritage studies, history, information management, librarianship, museum studies and public history. For 10/16 participants it was their first full time position since graduation and nine of these commenced in contract positions undertaking entry level, operational work. These contract positions were for periods from three to 18 months duration, with no expectations of permanent positions.

The article first outlines the research methodology of the overall study and then briefly addresses how workplace and professional relationships are viewed in the literature. The article then explores the findings from the research, focussing on supervisory relationships, mentoring relationships, stepping up to supervision, training and mentoring roles, and relationships with peers and colleagues, in the workplace and through professional associations.

**Research methodology**

The overall study adopted interpretive qualitative research methodologies, using in-depth, semi-structured interviews to understand “lived experiences” (Creswell, 1998, p. 51; Crotty, 1998, p. 9) and perceptions through the “eyes” of individuals (Smith, 1995, p. 9). A qualitative approach was chosen as the focus was on exploring perceptions and expectations of a small group of individuals to complement larger quantitative studies across the information sector (Hallam, 2008a, 2008b; Society of American Archivists: Principal consultant V. Walch, 2006). Nine public sector collecting institutions were approached with an invitation to new employees working with a collection in some capacity. It was then up to individuals to volunteer interest in participating, referred to as self-selection, a method that has its limitations but is considered acceptable for in-depth qualitative research (Sarantakos, 2005). All 16 individuals remained with the study, even though three commenced duties in different collecting institutions and cities over the course of the two years. Data was gathered from 48 interviews and about 32 hours of recorded conversations. In accordance with the ethics requirements of the study, the collecting institutions that employed the research participants are not identified and the participants referred to in this article have been given fictitious names.

There was a longitudinal aspect to the research as participants were interviewed on three separate occasions to mark different milestones over a two-year period between 2006 and 2008. The series of interviews moved from factual to more reflective questions, following
Seidman’s (1998) multiple interview model. In each of the three interviews, participants were asked about relationships, so how they changed over time and how they influenced experiences and expectations over the two year period could be tracked. Qualitative research with small, self-selected samples has limitations. The study, however, sought to establish themes and patterns about experiences that complemented the evidence in the literature and from which others could learn. The study was not attempting to generalise or undertake extensive quantitative analysis.

One limitation was the reliance on the experiences and perspectives of individuals without gaining organisational perspectives. Hughes (2004) argued that confidentiality could be compromised if interviewees knew their managers or supervisors were also going to be interviewed:

The need to build trust and guarantee strict confidentiality to participants prevented contact with supervisors and colleagues, and hence the gathering of information from multiple points of view to any significant extent. What was most critical for this study was the point of view of the learner, since their perceptions of the workplace and their perceptions of their colleagues and supervisors would determine how they approached their learning and the extent to which they involved their supervisors in that learning, no matter what the supervisors or the organizations did or said (Hughes, 2004, p. 279).

The organisational perspective was considered, however, as the study compared findings against the literature on management, and learning and development in archival institutions, libraries and museums. Furthermore, conducting multiple interviews over time was a form of triangulation that reduced risk of biased ‘single moment’ responses to questions and overly negative or positive responses, especially about experiences with relationships (Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005; Sarantakos, 2005; Seidman, 1998). The study found that each participant encountered multiple relationships over the two years, with several having both positive and difficult relationships. This illustrates that the longitudinal approach helped guard against biased responses based on a specific experience or perspective.

To strengthen the ‘believability’ of the individual responses, several member checks were also undertaken, a process recommended in qualitative research (Gorman & Clayton, 2005; Kayrooz & Trevitt, 2005). Participants were asked to read through transcripts of selected interview responses when responding to follow up questions and were given the opportunity to clarify responses from previous interviews. Research sponsors who had worked in collecting institutions or taught in one or more of the related disciplines viewed and commented on advanced drafts.

**Literature review about workplace and professional relationships**

**Supervisory relationships**

The study sought to gather evidence about how relationships between information professionals and their supervisors supported learning. Debate in the literature from the information sector about the role of supervision focused on the perspective of the supervisor or organisation (Genoways & Ireland, 2003; Jordan & Lloy, 2002; Lee, 2009; Sanders, 2004). A connection between support, challenge, learning and trust in supervisory relationships emerged from several authors and would appear to be an essential combination for new employees. Studies set in the workplace found that unless there was an element of trust, employees were less likely to turn to supervisors as sources of learning (Boud, 2006;
Eraut, 2004; Hughes, 2004; Lizzio, Wilson, & Que, 2009; Reidy, 2006). Jenner (2008) in writing about new graduates in a workplace, also noted that one of the most difficult components of the first year for the graduates was relationships, not the work or access to training.

In studies of internships, Alderman and Milne (2005) and Daloz (1986) presented levels of support and challenge for supervision and mentoring for students in a matrix construct. Figure 1 is an adaption of the matrix developed by Daloz (1986, p. 214), using examples by Alderman and Milne (2005, p. 37). The vertical axis represents the extent of complexity of work undertaken and the extent of challenge, and the horizontal axis, the extent of support or guidance provided by the supervisor or mentor.

**Fig.1 Support for learning in a new workplace - a model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Low support/ High challenge</th>
<th>B. High support/ High challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complex work</td>
<td>Guided learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of challenge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimal guidance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extent of support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Left to work out complex problems alone</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Isolated or little contact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Low level repetitive work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supervisor/ mentor too busy so not given work to do</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. High support/ Low challenge</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Routine tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 'Mothering' inhibited learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Mentor offered too much support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Figure 1, the four quadrants show combinations of different outcomes of high and low support by supervisors and mentors, and high and low challenge in terms of complexity of work. The least effective combination would be Quadrant D: Low support/ Low challenge and for someone in an internship the most effective combination would be Quadrant B of High support/High challenge. Other studies about relationships in the workplace also debated the concepts of support and challenge (Eraut, 2004; Lizzio, et al., 2009), which would indicate the models developed by Alderman and Milne, and Daloz have application beyond work-based learning in an educational setting. MacKeracher (2004, p. 168) added another dimension to the complexity of relationships in a discussion about autonomous and relational learners. An autonomous learner could be more satisfied with a lower level of support than a relational learner, who thrived on learning from people.

**Perceptions and experiences of mentoring relationships**

Mentors, mentees, mentoring and mentoring relationships seem to have multiple contexts and meanings: “the very word ‘mentor’ has acquired a mythical status, suggesting almost superhuman powers to transform the mentee in the face of all odds” (Colley, 2003, p. 1).
Mentoring relationships could be formal, informal or spontaneous. Mentoring has been described as: “a treasured gift that they [mentors] can give to aspiring archivists” (Bastian & Webber, 2008, p. 42); or “mentorship can be in overt mentorship programs or it can be more subtle, such as the encouragement of a promising student worker to become an archivist” (Society of American Archivists: Principal consultant V. Walch, 2006, p. 422).

There was extensive debate in the literature about the merits or otherwise of mentoring programs, both structured and more informal arrangements for new starters or students during internships. Outside mentoring during internships, the focus of the literature was on how programs were implemented in educational institutions, communities and workplaces. The emphasis was on organised or structured one-to-one mentoring relationships with a more senior or experienced colleague, and involving some kind of matching and pairing for a set time frame. There were fewer studies on how an individual experienced various mentoring relationships and to what extent they thought they were successful, though a study by Hicks (2011) in the library and information services field highlighted risks in certain kinds of mentoring relationships. A broad picture, however, of the kinds of mentoring relationships, both structured or informal, a new employee might encounter in workplace setting was able to be drawn from the literature, although there is only space in this article to highlight a few (Brennan, 2003; Brooks & Sikes, 1997; Cochran-Smith & Paris, 1995; Darwin & Palmer, 2009; Funk & Kochan, 1999; Lee, 2009; Rolfe-Flett, 2002; Zachary, 2005).

There is increasing debate in the education and workplace literature about online mentoring relationships as alternatives or additions to face-to-face environments (Chang, 2007; Motteram & Forrester, 2005; Noe, 2008; Salmon, 2000; Zachary, 2005). These online platforms or networks are currently provided through workplaces, professional communities of practice or education institutions. Social media networks also offer other avenues for mentoring and building relationships to support learning and does not necessarily assume a distance-based relationship (Franks, 2009; Lloyd, Dean, & Cooper, 2009).

While not investigated in detail for this article, there was wide variation in the mentoring programs offered by professional associations whose members worked in collecting institutions or were studying to work in the information sector (Association of Canadian Archivists, 2009; Australian Library and Information Association, 2009; Australian Society of Archivists, 2009; International Council on Archives, 2009; Society of American Archivists, 2010; Society of Archivists, 2008). The research participants would have had access to these kinds of programs, but none did over the two years covered by the study even though over half had joined a professional association or had been exposed to one through attending conferences or seminars. It would be worth more investigation to find out reasons why members of professional associations do or do not access mentoring programs.

**First time supervisory, training and mentoring roles**

Supervisors, trainers and mentors have a pivotal role in the transfer of knowledge from theory to practice or from one context to another for emerging professionals, but also need skills and support to carry out those responsibilities. Jordan and Lloyd (2002, p. 240) recognised that first time supervisors may not have had any prior experience in supervision, but were expected to develop others. If trainees found that their supervisor could not help them they would look to peers for advice and the organisation might have to face the risk of incorrect or counter-productive messages:

However, the supervisor must be careful to check that peer group learning is conveying helpful attitudes, and not the opposite. It has been known for new members
of staff to be socialized by the co-workers into hostile attitudes (Jordan & Lloyd, 2002, p. 243).

There were mixed messages in the literature about issues associated with leadership training or development, which could have implications for the development of trusting relationships in the workplace. Across the archives, library and museum disciplines, issues were identified about recruitment, retention, professional development and leadership. Hallam (2008a) Hernon, Powell and Young (2003) found some inconsistencies in attitudes towards leadership training and qualities in libraries. Baldwin and Ackerson (2006) conducted a study about potential gaps in leadership levels in museums and found that mid-career training for leadership was sparse. Holmes and Hatton (2008) found evidence for attention to leadership training in the museum sector but little for management, which included staff development – one role of a supervisor. Crockett (2007) and Dearstyne (2009) found similar gaps in the management and leadership training in the archives and records management fields.

**Research results about workplace and professional relationships**

The research study findings identified that the research participants relied on a number of relationships to guide them in applying professional principles and facilitating the essential transfer of knowledge and experience to a specific role in the workplace. The participants built a rich array of relationships with supervisors, peers, teams, mentors, managers and fellow students and used these as sources of knowledge and motivation. Figure 2 below shows a wide range of relationships that the research participants were able to draw upon during those first 2 years.

**Fig. 2: Relationships experienced in workplace and professional contexts**

Figure 2 shows a wide range of relationships that the research participants were able to draw upon during those first two years. Some relationships, such as buddies (co-workers who showed new starters where everything was and make local introductions) were short-lived but valued. Others, such as mentoring relationships, were sometimes longer lasting, but all had an influence on the participants over the two years.
Findings about relationships with supervisors

From the perspective of the research participants, relationships with supervisors emerged as a major influence in many aspects of their experiences and expectations. A supervisor was the person to whom the research participant reported for guidance, support, allocation of work, access to professional development and management of personal development plans. All the research participants had at least two supervisors over the two years, with a mixture of positive and difficult relationships, so their responses were not based on single experiences. Positive relationships engendered a perception of respect, trust, support and encouragement, as highlighted by the following responses.

- “New supervisor has been really good. Initially I was employed on contract purely as a cataloguer. Since she could see my interests she started me in exhibitions and encouraged more diverse work” (Melissa, Interview III).
- “[My supervisor] encouraged me to apply for positions to get into the area relevant to my studies” (Brigid, Interview II).
- “All my supervisors were good, I just had too many and continuity was difficult” (Hannah, Interview II).

Difficult relationships were characterised by perceptions of both being ignored and not being trusted to make professional judgments, or not sharing information. Examples of not-so-positive relationships are reflected in the following responses by the research participants.

- “Did not encourage movement into other areas and blocked higher duties” (Rhiannon, Interview II).
- “Did not share information about how my work fitted in” (Teresa, Interview I).
- “Working in a vacuum with no support from immediate supervisor” (Rohan, Interview I).

Difficult relationships were a catalyst for participants to look for other positions. Three participants started applying for or obtained positions in different institutions because of difficult relationships, not because the work was not challenging or engaging. Their experiences reinforced views in the literature that people learn through relationships built on trust and if the trust was not there, they would look elsewhere (Eraut, 2004; Hughes, 2002, 2004; Lizzio, et al., 2009).

Given the prominence of literature about how supervisors should manage difficult team members, more advice is needed on how individuals navigate difficult and often changing relationships. Figure 3 highlights extracts of the participants’ responses to questions about their relationships with supervisors. It illustrates how their experiences mapped to the model developed by Alderman and Milne (2006) and Daloz (1986), presented earlier in this article at Figure 1. While these examples focused on supervisors, the model could be applied to any relationship in a learning or socialisation context.
The experiences of the research participants, however, did not seem to quite match the model presented at Figure 1. Even though most of the participants commenced in entry level positions, all were given challenging work. For example, even though Alice felt like a "worker ant" because there was so much to do, the work itself was challenging and was directly relevant to what she had studied for over the previous five years. For Rhiannon, the work was challenging, but she was just not left to get on with it. Where there was low support provided by supervisors, the participants looked elsewhere, to colleagues and team members. Participants who did not have a positive supervisory relationships believed that it impacted on their access to professional development, such as: higher duties in the same or different areas of the organisation; rotations, which were short term placements in other areas of the organisation ‘at level’; and rosters, working in areas such as in front-of-house roles, reading rooms, reference desks or online chat rooms for set periods each week or month. These rosters were an addition to the set responsibilities of the participants but were regarded as valuable ways to learn more about an organisation and to develop different relationships.

Some considered their supervisors as mentors, even though the label was not formalised in any way by the organisation or the supervisor; rather it was how the research participant perceived the relationship. There was also recognition that the supervisor was not always regarded as a mentor.

- “My supervisor was a mentor. I would always come to her with any queries. If I felt something could be improved I could come to her and say – can we do it like this?” (Nadia, Interview I).
- “I have a fantastic supervisor and he has been a bit of a mentor. He has created a really good team environment – no one wants to leave” (Cathy, Interview III).
- “My supervisor was quite busy and not there very often. He tried to be a mentor but difficult as there were not shared interests. It was disappointing as my previous supervisor was very encouraging and was a mentor” (Melissa, Interview II).
• “My supervisor was not really a source of learning or a mentor” (Liam, Interview I).

Findings about mentoring relationships
The findings about mentoring relationships did not reflect the structured, organised programs with matching of mentoring partners and set time frames described in the literature. Most of the nine different collecting institutions in which the participants worked over the two years did not have organised formal mentoring programs for new employees, though a few provided mentors for students during internships. The participants found mentoring relationships through their own means; in supervisors, as illustrated above, peers, friends, team members, colleagues at higher levels, or for specific projects. A few also had experiences mentoring others: students; co-workers through a first time exhibition; or as a team leader. Table 1 illustrates the transitory or chameleon nature of mentoring relationships. There were few formal programs but rather short-term relationships for a particular context or ongoing but informal relationships not attached to program or structure.

Table 1: Mentoring relationships of the research participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mentoring relationship</th>
<th>Occurrence</th>
<th>Participants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Seeing others as mentors</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor, including a younger more senior supervisor - informal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Nadia, Cathy, Alice, Melissa Eliza and Tanya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More senior colleague on a formal or informal basis</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hannah, Phoebe and Anna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentored through first time exhibition (not supervisor)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teresa and Tanya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentor while on internship</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Alice, Phoebe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team as mentor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Sophie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mentoring others</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring new starter for first time exhibition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Tanya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring team members</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Lydia and Rohan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mentoring student during internship</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Phoebe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No mentoring relationship identified</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would have liked a mentor</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Brigid, Liam, Rhiannon and Lydia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 illustrates the transitory or chameleon nature of mentoring relationships. There were few formal programs but rather short-term relationships for a particular context or on-going but informal relationships not attached to a program or structure. Tanya and Phoebe, for example, each had three different kinds of mentoring relationships over the two years. The range of experiences an individual might have over time and at the same time was not expected when compared with the discussion in the literature. This diversity illustrates how
multiple approaches could exist in collecting institutions at the same time, whether formal or informal or both. It could also be inferred that single approaches to mentoring programs with structure and pairing might not reflect the changing dynamics of mentoring relationships from the perspective of the individual, thus leading to different expectations of outcomes.

The following quotes from the research participants illustrate their perspectives about mentoring relationships with colleagues in the workplace who were not their supervisor.

- “I did not have a formal mentor, but an informal one, who was not my supervisor and contact continued while acting in other areas” (Hannah, Interview III).
- “My mentor stayed on as an informal mentor after the period of formal assignment ceased, as I moved to different areas of the organisation” (Phoebe, Interview II).
- “A mentor for the whole team gets shared. There was some kind of structure in the mentoring relationship, but it allowed free rein of discussions” (Anna, Interview II).
- “My manager, who was not my immediate supervisor, was a source of new professional knowledge when undertaking exhibition work for the first time and I was able to work on my own after that” (Tanya, Interview II).
- “My current manager rather than direct supervisor has taken on a mentoring role. She is the person I latched onto in terms of asking questions, approving courses and helping me with my PDP [Personal Development Plan]” (Alice, Interview III).
- “The team was a source of advice, encouraged me to apply for positions and helped me understand the system. I did not need to look elsewhere other than the team. The organisation had a mentor program, but I only found out later, not at the initial orientation, by which time the team had provided a mentoring role” (Sophie, Interview I).

Phoebe made an insightful comment about the differences between her supervisor during her internship and a supervisor while she was working in a casual position in a collecting institution while she was studying:

“The mentor during my internship challenged my thinking about professional principles and practice. She took me outside my comfort zone as I noticed the difference between mentor and normal supervisor who made sure I knew the tasks and completed them” (Phoebe, Interview III).

Several participants in the research study did not have mentoring relationships for part of all of their first two years but believed a mentor would have helped in certain situations.

- “A mentor would have been helpful after my supervisor left and was not replaced” (Nadia, Interview I).
- “My end goal was a curatorial position. Now that I am here, I need new goals and without a mentor, it has been very difficult – that is why a lack of mentor has been such an issue because I need one at this point. I need some help” (Melissa, Interview II).
- “I would have liked a mentor outside my branch to assist with identifying learning and development options” (Lydia, Interview I).
- “The organisation had a mentoring program but it was not really explained well. You had to find someone yourself, but as a new person it was hard to know who might be suitable. The program could have been explained more, so it was a missed opportunity” (Brigid, Interview I).
Mentoring relationships influenced the participants over the whole two years and were critical to their future outlooks for career and learning choices. Mentoring relationships offered an opportunity to learn about their profession, their place in the organisation, the workplace culture, themselves, and to muse about future careers or directions in a trusting environment. The experiences of the participants differed, but the one persistent thread was that the concept of a mentor, expressed through relationships with one or more persons, was highly valued as a source of learning and advice, and a cause of concern when they did not eventuate. These views resonated with the literature: that people learn from those who they trust, whether or not they are formally assigned supervisors, mentors or colleagues.

Findings about first time supervisory, training and mentor roles
Relationships changed constantly over the two years of the research study, through changes in supervisors, positions and teams. The most significant change in relationships was stepping up to positions of trust as the participants took on supervisory, training and mentoring roles in those first two years. Six of the 11 research participants who started in entry levels position were given supervision, training or mentoring responsibilities for the first time during the two years of the study. None of these participants had any previous experience with these kinds of responsibilities, although one found a unit on supervision during her degree valuable. By the end of the two years 13 participants were supervising, training or mentoring others or were working at levels where these roles would be expected. However, only the three participants who started out supervising teams received any development over the two years. Table 2 shows the kinds of roles the participants undertook for the first time during the two years.

Table 2: Changing roles: Stepping up to positions of trust for the first time

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Initial role</th>
<th>Stepping up to new roles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning from supervisors</td>
<td>Supervising others for the first time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having a mentor as a new starter</td>
<td>Being a mentor to student for the first time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from others</td>
<td>Training team members in local systems and procedures and providing induction training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning from teams and peers</td>
<td>Regarded as a source of advice by team and peers and feeling respected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participated in activities of professional association</td>
<td>Joined a committee of a professional association and led projects or events</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most who took up these roles did not receive training in how to be effective supervisors, team leaders, mentors or how to train others, yet they were supposed to be able to support knowledge and skill development and be seen as a source of learning. Several participants had received the building blocks for managing different relationships and developing the trust of others through training in conflict skills, negotiating a personal development plan, customer service and interpersonal skills. These, however, were from the perspective of an individual, not from the perspective of someone stepping up to roles involving managing or leading relationships. Being able to develop relationships was identified as an essential attribute for information professionals (Ammons-Stephens, Cole, Jenkins-Gibbs, Riehle, &
This gap between the roles undertaken and access to development could have had an influence on how the research participants developed relationships with those who might look to them as supervisors, mentors and learning facilitators, which could in turn influence the transfer of knowledge to others.

It would seem that the collecting institutions had recruited highly qualified and experienced individuals who were keen to expand their knowledge and skills. It would appear that neither the research participants nor their organisations were prepared for such rapid movement and change in responsibilities. The difference between expectations and what happened, reinforced views mentioned previously in the literature about gaps in access to opportunities to develop skills and knowledge to manage or lead relationships.

Conclusion
The research study found that relationships based on trust and respect were more likely to be avenues of learning, but the relationships were not always from well-defined or expected sources. The findings highlighted in this article identified that the research participants relied on multiple changing relationships to guide them in applying professional principles and facilitating that essential transfer of knowledge and experience to a specific role in the workplace. This glimpse into the experiences and perceptions of relationships of 16 professionals as they started new positions in collecting institutions has drawn out several key findings. All participants changed teams, supervisors, and had varying exposure to mentoring relationships over the two years, providing none to several different but rewarding experiences. Outside those with supervisors, most relationships were combinations of short-lived arrangements for a specific project, or informal or unstructured over longer periods of time. If they did not feel comfortable with their supervisor, or the supervisor left or was too busy, they would look elsewhere for advice about career and study options, though were not always successful in finding it.

Building relationships from which emerging professionals can learn is as important as building knowledge. With between three and five years study and experience in more than one collecting institution, through internships, volunteer and paid employment, the participants came with knowledge that they could quickly apply. They found that their studies made sense and were relevant to their work. The challenge for them was building relationships to support their development. Advice on how emerging professionals navigate the increasing various social media, educational and professional communities of practice networks that operate outside formal institution-based programs is needed, so they can maximise these avenues of relationships.

First time supervisors, trainers and mentors need support to help them facilitate trust by the next cohort of emerging professionals. The participants did not expect they would be stepping up so soon, as they had heard that progression in collecting institutions was slow. They need to be supported to take on these roles so others will come to trust and learn from them.

The findings also suggest there is much synergy in how individuals engage with the disciplines within the context of collecting institutions. The literature about learning and relationships within these disciplines has much to share about building professional knowledge and developing the essential relationships to ensure knowledge transfer. The core body of theory and practice that defines the information disciplines is not disputed through these findings. There are opportunities, however, within collecting institutions and across the
disciplines to build common approaches in supporting and nurturing emerging professionals as they explore different ways to pursue their careers working with collections.

The research participants wanted to work in collecting institutions, not so much for a specific job with pre-determined skills or even necessarily a particular discipline, but through passion for, and commitment to, an ideal of working with a collection. The disciplines at large, professional associations and collecting institutions can offer rich and rewarding learning and working experiences but not all pathways are clearly laid out from the perspective of someone starting out in a new position. For individuals, the findings illustrate that their first professional post (or previous experience) is not necessarily an immutable model for their future careers, rather that they can take the initiative to shape and influence their relationships and directions. Being able to develop relationships is therefore a critical skill for job satisfaction and career progression. In an environment where emerging professionals, whether it is their first or subsequent career, have multiple options for specialisation and development, what they need most are trusting relationships that give them confidence to follow whatever pathway they choose.

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