



Internationalization and the North American University Library

Karen Bordonaro

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This book offers a fresh perspective on understanding university library work with international users in North America. It investigates what librarians, international students, and international scholars perceive the role of the university library to be in internationalization in higher education. It also explores the phenomenon of internationalization itself as it is lived and experienced by both librarians and international users.

Personal definitions and experiences of internationalization offered by librarians and international users include viewing internationalization as the broadening of knowledge on multiple levels, the idea of seeing oneself as part of a greater whole, and the building of international research connections. Both librarians and international users describe elements of internationalization such as exposure, awareness, engagement, empathy, and transcending boundaries. Inherent contradictions are present as well, such as the stronger emphasis on defining differences rather than similarities and the disconnect between inward and outward looking aspects of internationalization.

Finally, this book connects theoretical perspectives concerning the phenomenon of internationalization to the practice of academic librarianship in North America. It does this by presenting what librarians in both the United States and Canada think about working with international users in terms of benefits, challenges, and best practices. Practical lessons learned include the need to move beyond focusing solely on the linguistic and cultural challenges of working with international users to also consider the positive aspects of working with them, such as widening worldviews and expanding personal knowledge.

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