The Switch:
Journeying from health to academic librarianship

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My journey:

health
librarianship

@StevenPChang   #ALIARAIS17

My journey:

health librarianship

Strengths

- Fascinating clinical environment. Very real. Evidence-based medicine and patient care – a matter of life and death?
- Work with interesting communities. Heart surgeons, psychiatric nurses, social workers, psychologists, emergency doctors, etc.
- Small teams mean you get experience in a bit of everything
- Agility and flexibility
- Systematic reviews and expert searching – complex and stimulating.

Challenges

- Smaller sector. Fewer jobs than academic libraries.
- Making the most of limited resources
- Smaller teams. Can sometimes feel isolated.
- Risk of being pigeon-holed if you stay in one sector too long

Is the grass greener on the other side?

- ***Do your own research project*** on the strengths/weaknesses of your target sector

- Network ***purposefully***. Ask people.
  - What does an average day look like in their sector?
  - What do they like? More importantly what do they ***NOT*** like?

- Which patch of grass within your target sector are you aiming for?
  - Don't look at an entire sector as a monolithic whole!

- Is life on the other side of the fence really how you imagine?
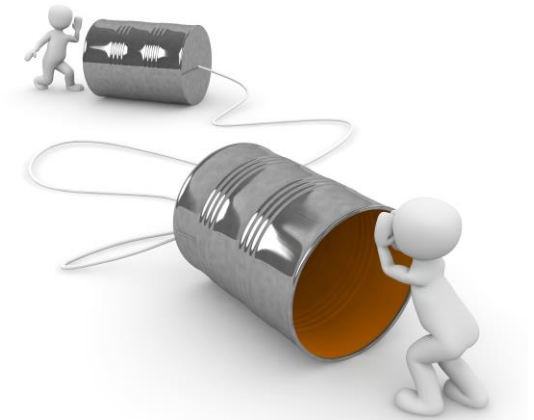
You know more than you think!

- Step outside your static view of your own experiences

- We accumulate experiences and learn faster than we can process, document, or reflect on those skills

- So put aside time to reflect, think outside the box, change the vocabulary you use to articulate your skills

- Change what you know. Pursue experiences/opportunities that align with your target sector.

- Include experiences outside your day-to-day job! e.g. professional association committees, volunteering, projects.

Know your language.
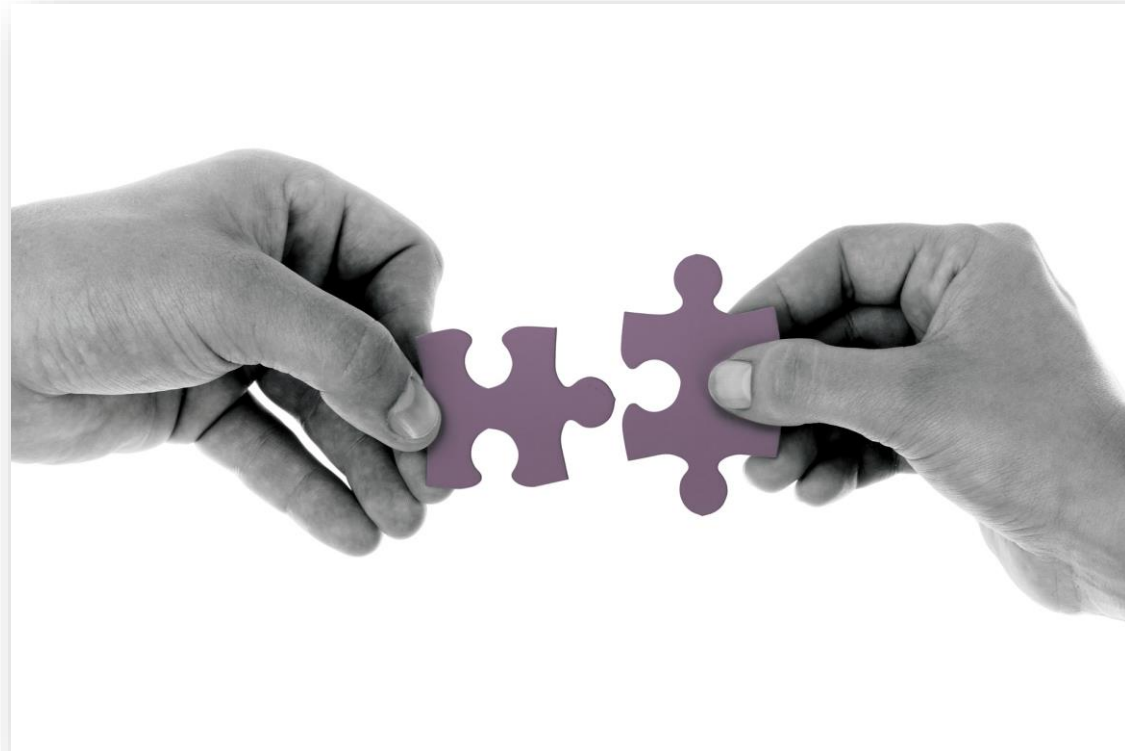
Know their language.

Speak their language

- Different sectors speak different languages.

- You may have the desired skills, but they won't know if you don't speak to their vocab and frame of reference

- EXAMPLE: "Pedagogical principles" or teaching? Instructional design? Training? Curriculum-embedded learning? Information literacy? Digital literacy?

- Don't use language familiar to you but unfamiliar to your target sector

What's your niche?

- Don't chase a whole sector.

- Chase a *particular type of job* in that sector that *your specific niche* matches up with.
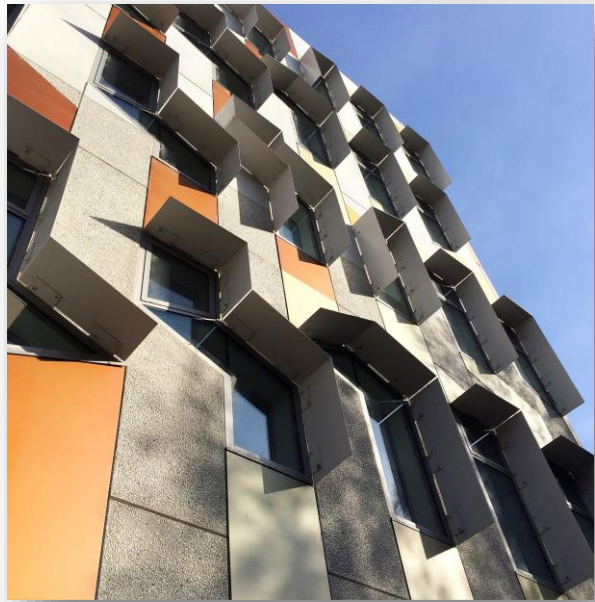
My journey:

academic librarianship

My journey:

academic librarianship

Strengths

- Huge environment = many diverse people to learn from
- Variety of teams and sections = internal opportunities, secondments
- Can be intellectually challenging, endlessly interesting work
- Working conditions are decent to good (for now…)
- Culture of collegiality. Communities of practice.

Challenges

- Universities are large and bureaucratic. Titanic ships turn slowly.
- Entrenched traditions can weigh down the pace of change
- Larger teams = narrower, more specialised roles. Sometimes.
  - Target liaison librarian jobs for more varied, generalist work
- Challenging workloads, hectic pace. Especially at peak semester times.

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Further reading

Health/specials librarianship

So, you want to be a hospital librarian?

http://letterstoayounglibrarian.blogspot.com.au/2013/12/so-you-want-to-be-hospital-librarian-by.html

The accidental health sciences librarian

https://www.amazon.com/Accidental-Health-Sciences-Librarian/dp/1573873950

Academic librarianship

Deakin University vignette video: What Happens in the Library?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pJEVx_kOsHc

Insights into peoples' first year of academic librarian work

http://acrlog.org/categories/first-year-academic-librarian-experience/

Academic Librarianship Today

https://rowman.com/ISBN/9781442278745/Academic-Librarianship-Today

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Nick V
http://melbournedaily.blogspot.com.au/2012/02/la-trobe-university-lake.html

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