

Raisa Iivonen. Mentoring in a veterinary library

Viikki Science Library, University of Helsinki, Finland

What is mentoring? According to Lee Herman (1) some definitions are made first:

- The principles of mentoring and the philosophy of dialogue
- Asking questions
- Curriculum as collaborative planning and learning
- The personal and the academic: dialogue as cognitive love
- The mentor as learner: habits of work
- Access to and within the academy

The libraries of the University of Helsinki have started a mentoring program, in which the Viikki Science

Library is participating with six people. The former Veterinary Medicine Library forms now one of the subject fields of the Viikki Science Library and one of its librarians is involved in the mentoring program forming a mentor/actor –couple with a colleague from the Student Library.

The poster describes the program of the mentoring process: what is expected? How do the mentor and actor plan their process (“the journey”) and do they find their way home (or wherever they plan to travel). What are the benefits for both libraries of this program?

One goal is to gather all the “silent knowledge” from both libraries writing their histories; it is the background for the documentation process of the working practices. Also the spreading of best practices is wanted, deconstruction of automated working processes, creating new ways when thinking and planning work flows. Mentoring is a dialogical process between two persons: prediction of its results is difficult. The program started at the end of 2004 and its duration is one year.

What are the benefits to the veterinary libraries community? Can the veterinary librarians and/or animal health information specialists apply internationally the results of this program? There is already a lot of international co-operation between veterinary libraries, why not try mentoring across the frontiers?