

Creating Connections through Slow Librarianship

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Land Acknowledgement

I recognize the People of the Three Fires: the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples on whose land I work and reside. The Three Fires People are Indigenous to this land; this is their ancestral territory. Every university is built on stolen, native land. Here, we are guests and one way to practice right relations is to develop genuine ways to acknowledge the histories and traditions of the people who originated here first, who are still here, and who tend to the land always.

Agenda

1. Check-in
2. Looking Back
3. What Is Slow Librarianship?
4. Why This Work Matters Now
5. Slow Librarianship Supports Well-being
6. 5 minute break
7. Zine-making Activity
8. Small, Slow Practices
9. Discussion
10. Q & A



Check-in

Take a moment to close your eyes or gaze downward and be present in this moment. How do you feel?

Acknowledge that feeling and thank yourself for being present in this moment.



Looking Back



"The first problem for all of us, men and women, is not to learn, but to unlearn."
—Gloria Steinem

Slow Librarianship

"Workers in slow libraries are focused on relationship-building, deeply understanding and meeting patron needs, and providing equitable services to their communities. Internally, slow library culture is focused on learning and reflection, collaboration and solidarity, valuing all kinds of contributions, and supporting staff as whole people. Slow librarianship is a process, not a destination; it is an orientation towards our work, ourselves, and others that creates positive change. It is an organizational philosophy that supports workers and builds stronger relationships with our communities."

Meredith Farkas

<https://meredith.wolfwater.com/wordpress/2021/10/18/what-is-slow-librarianship/>

Slow Librarianship

Good

“Being good begins by recognizing that libraries have not always been good for everyone. This requires bringing in critical practice, where we identify, question, and ultimately dismantle structures, practices, policies, and assumptions that oppress, exploit, exclude, or otherwise cause harm to our patrons or library workers...

Slow libraries are driven by their values over a desire to innovate or produce visible wins.”

Slow Librarianship

Human(e)

“In humane organizations, library workers are supported as whole people with bodies and responsibilities and limitations beyond the workplace.”

Thoughtful

A thoughtful organization is contemplative and embraces collaborative learning and a culture of appreciation and gratitude.



Slow Librarianship is Mindful Librarianship

- ▷ Care
- ▷ Connection
- ▷ Intentionality
- ▷ Mindfulness
- ▷ Reflection
- ▷ Well-being





“

“Academic work is
by its nature never
done.”


Berg, M., & Seeber, B. K. (2016). *The slow professor: Challenging the culture of speed in the academy*. University of Toronto Press.

Why This Work Matters Now

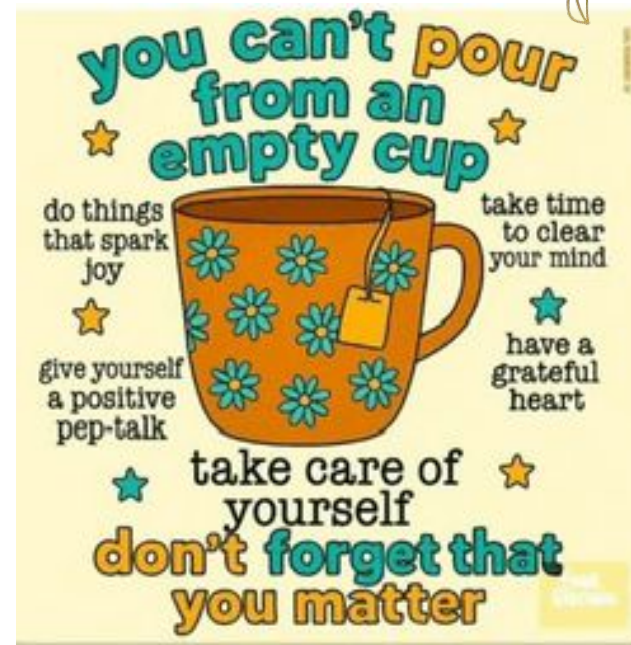


We're working within systems that reward speed, visible labor, constant productivity, and innovation.

We're living through climate disasters, rapidly changing technologies, decreasing budgets, the lingering effects of a pandemic and so much more.



We cannot build inclusive, thriving, and innovative institutions if the people who staff them are depleted and burnt out.



A close-up photograph of a hand placing white dice on a dark surface. The dice are arranged to spell out 'TIME OUT'. The top faces of the dice show 'TI', 'ME', 'O', 'U', and 'T'. The bottom faces show 'BU', 'RN', and 'O'. The background is a blurred green and yellow.

100% of 0 is 0

TI **ME** **O** **U** **T**
BU **RN** **O**

Peters, A. (2024). The Blueprint of Happy.

Slow Librarianship Supports Well-being and Connection

- ▶ Intentionality
- ▶ Relational Work
- ▶ Equity and Care
- ▶ Re-imagining Metrics Culture
- ▶ Promoting Work-Life Balance



Why Zines?



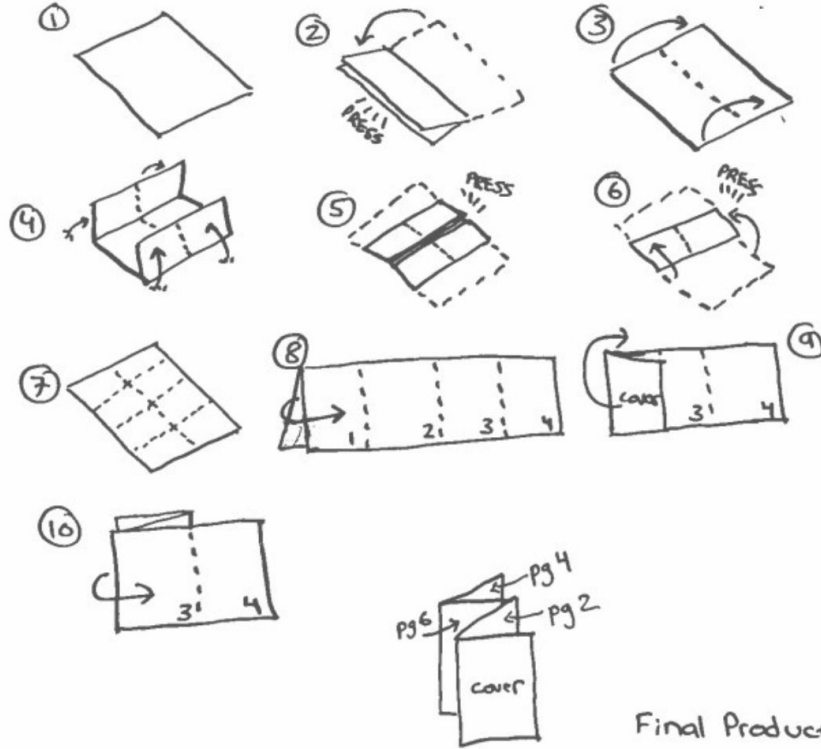
Zines can be used to process information and “provide a vehicle for ideas, expression, and art. They build connections between people and within groups, and provide modes of communication in addition to information dissemination.”

How to Fold

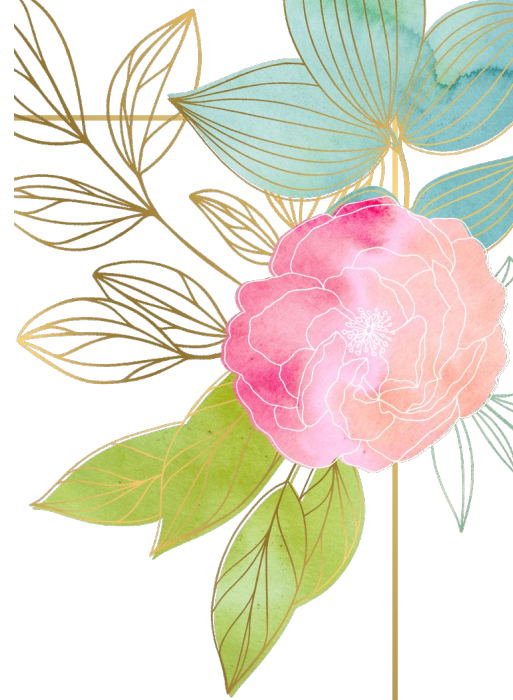
AN

8-PAGE Mini-Zine

(no scissors required!)



Final Product!



Front Cover


How do you define Slow Librarianship? What are some words to describe it OR how do you picture it?

Page 2 Prompt

Reflect on a time where you may have practiced slow librarianship without knowing it. Briefly write about that experience and how you felt or draw it out.

Small, Slow Practices



- Establish meeting and project planning practices.
 - No agenda, no meeting. 30 vs. 60 min. meetings.
 - Clear expectations, such as around email turnaround times.
 - Can you check email just a few times per day to make time for deep work?
 - Review unwritten guidelines and write or discard them.
 - Make space and time for relationship-building.
 - Coffee break, walk, check-ins at start of meetings.
 - Center individual's whole lives, not just career advancement, when supervising and mentoring.
 - Establish regular reflection practices for yourself and/or team.
 - Journaling, team check-ins, end-of-day or weekly reviews, creative outlets.
- 


Lesson from the Cookie Monster



<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/udQz8-IOVEE>

Small, Slow Practices




- Review and reconsider your screen time. Create an analog bag.
 - Take stretching or mindful breathing breaks.
 - Limit the decisions you need to make daily. Where can you rely on habits or simplification?
 - Learn to say 'no'. Drop something if you add something.
 - Try the 75 Grow Challenge: @badarteveryday
 - Embrace imperfection and creativity. Don't let perfect be the enemy of good or done.
 - Consider creating a Shadow CV or resume.
 - Make art. Watch 'The case for making art when the world is on fire' by Amie McNee.
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XZ9z6OewRO>
- 

Page 3 Prompt



How does slow librarianship support community and connection? OR
How might you use slow librarianship practices to foster collaboration or belonging at your library?



Page 4 Prompt

Consider the barriers to practicing slow librarianship. Describe them or draw them.



Page 5 Prompt

What supports might be in place or could you put in place to enable you and/or your colleagues to practice slow librarianship? Describe these or draw them.



Page 6 Prompt

What's one small thing you can slow down next week?
Describe or draw.

OR: What slow or mindful practice can you try?



Back Cover: Final Prompt

What do YOU need today?

What will you do to nourish your soul today?

What will you do to fill your heart today?

How will you take care of your inner child today?



Partner Share

Turn to someone near you and share one of your zine pages OR something you learned today that you will take with you to your library in the next couple of weeks.





Group Share

Recommended Resources

- Berg, M., & Seeber, B. K. (2016). *The slow professor: Challenging the culture of speed in the academy*. University of Toronto Press.
- Farkas, M. (2021, October 18). *What is slow librarianship?* Information Wants To Be Free.
<https://meredith.wolfwater.com/wordpress/2021/10/18/what-is-slow-librarianship/>
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<https://www.insidehighered.com/opinion/career-advice/diversity/2023/06/08/researchers-need-shadow-cv-highlight-inequities-opinion>
- Honoré, C. (2004). *In praise of slow: How a worldwide movement is challenging the cult of speed*. Vintage Canada.
- Illingworth, S. *Slow AI Newsletter*. <https://theslowai.substack.com/>
- McAlary, B. (2018). *Slow: Simple living for a frantic world*. Sourcebooks.
- McNee, A. (2025). 'The case for making art when the world is on fire.'
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2XZ9z6OewRO>
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<https://litwinbooks.com/books/slow-librarianship/>

Credits

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

- ▶ Presentation template by [SlidesCarnival](#)





Please reach out to me at rosenera@gvsu.edu