



I'm new.

How do I get to know you?
Onboarding in a pandemic.



Margaret Bremner, Senior Research Librarian (BELA)



My starting point

Changing jobs is stressful. The first few weeks are for orientation in the new workplace, wandering corridors and tea rooms to make acquaintances. Ongoing support is provided to ensure that the new staff member understands their new role. Onboarding is the official term for this experience. It is a process that is used to inculcate new staff with organisational culture, provide them opportunities to meet people, establish their identity and take on the new role with oversight by managers (Keisling & Laning, 2016) . Onboarding can be difficult to do and requires good management practices.



My questions

- What is the “normal” practice for new employees?
 - What is considered “best practice”?
 - What has happened for me?
 - How did doing everything online affect me?
- 

What is onboarding?



This is the time when you first start in a new organisation.



Much of the literature focusses on the socialisation of the new employee, on ensuring that they fit within the new organisation.



It is a period where the organisation can make an impact on the new employee that will affect the relationship between them.



It can be considered as a term for up to the first 18 months in a new position.



The cost of recruiting a new employee approaches 30% of their salary.



ROI for a comprehensive onboarding program can reduce turnover from 44% to 14%

(Hall-Ellis, 2014; Keisling & Laning, 2016)

Normal practice

Introduce employee to colleagues in their area

Prepare their desk and supplies

Morning tea

Show them around their immediate office including toilets, tea rooms

An organisational chart to show them where they fit in the organisation

Compulsory training:
Occupational Health and Safety, Policies, Procedures

Task-oriented

(Stephenson, 2015)



Best practice

Think about the employee and what they **need** to know

A specific set of learning outcomes, self-directed and guided approaches for acquiring information

A program that is focussed on expectations, organisational tools and broad-based relationship building

Extensive interaction with colleagues outside the immediate work area

Be open to “sensitive” discussions about the organisation

Explain to new employees, and their colleagues, why they were hired

Early opportunities for them to work on high visibility or high priority projects

Setting milestones to help them determine their success

(Keisling & Laning, 2016; Hall-Ellis, 2014)

Logistics issues



Getting a computer to
Springfield



A willing staff member to meet
me and take me around
campus to organise computer
set up, staff card and parking
permit



Regular meetings with
manager



Allocation of “buddies”



My journey

Starting in a Pandemic shut down (May 5)

University with 3 campuses, all of them closed for the moment

Small team, with 60% of team (including manager) based at Toowoomba

40% of team based at Springfield (this includes me)

Working from home required equipment, set up of computer, meetings with team

Broader understanding of where the team fits within the organisation

Online training

Lots of zoom sessions to meet people

I have still only met one person face to face

Imposter Syndrome

I think we all know this one!

Transitional challenges, organisational knowledge is nil.

Complex and varied human resources systems.

Librarians set high expectations for themselves, including *being able to find what they need*.

Lack of clarity in our position: position descriptions often allow for a broad range of skills.

Not asking about why we were asked to take on the position.

Age is not a barrier to Imposter Syndrome.

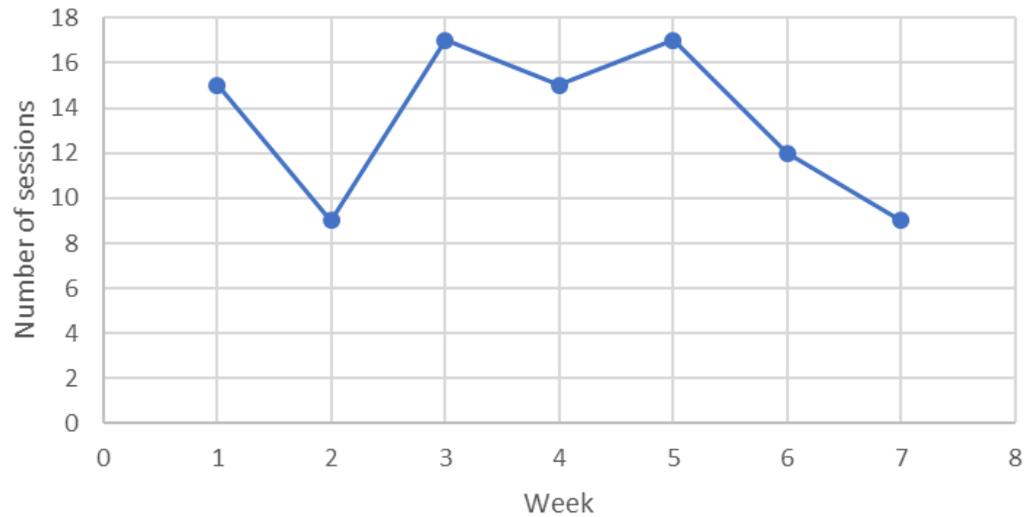
(Lacey & Parlette-Stewart, 2017)



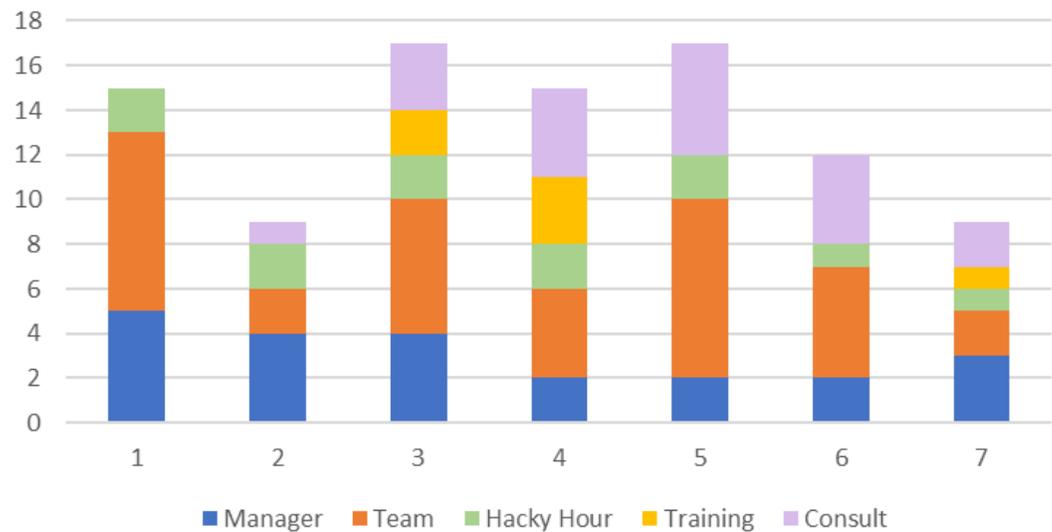
Where I am now

- ▶ Zoom fatigue!!!!
- ▶ Starting to feel “useful”.
- ▶ There have been ups and downs, I wore my Imposter hat for a week before I acknowledged it.
- ▶ I managed Imposter Syndrome by having a discussion with my manager.
- ▶ I am asking more questions, ensuring that I know what is expected.
- ▶ Discussing issues as they arise.
- ▶ I am lucky to have a manager whom I can talk with about my workload.
- ▶ Relying on my “life-long learning” attitude to help keep on track.
- ▶ Some days I find that I am “treading water”.
- ▶ This is my 8th week at USQ

Total Zoom sessions by week



Breakdown of Zoom requests



94
Zoom
sessions in 7
weeks



Positives

- I feel like I have come home to a big country town, everyone has been welcoming.
- Have spent more time with staff outside my work group than I expected, so I hopefully know who to talk to when I am looking for specific information.
- Zoom has worked well.
- Meetings on zoom have allocated time limits, this has allowed me to get to know some people personally rather than just their work personas.



References

- Hall-Ellis, S. D. (2014). Onboarding to improve library retention and productivity. *The Bottom Line*, 27(4), 138-141. doi:10.1108/bl-10-2014-0026
- Keisling, B., & Laning, M. (2016). We are happy to be here: The onboarding experience in academic libraries. *Journal of Library Administration*, 56(4), 381-394. doi:10.1080/01930826.2015.1105078
- Lacey, S., & Parlette-Stewart, M. (2017). Jumping into the deep: Imposter syndrome, defining success and the new librarian. *Partnership: The Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research*, 12(1). doi:10.21083/partnership.v12i1.3979
- McKelvey, H., & Frank, J. L. (2018). Improving onboarding with employee experience journey mapping: A fresh take on a traditional UX technique. *Weave: Journal of Library User Experience*, 1(9). doi:10.3998/weave.12535642.0001.903
- Stephenson, J. (2015). Improve your employee onboarding process with seven storytelling tips. *The Journal for Quality and Participation*, 38(3), 26.