When Life Hands You Lemons: Overcoming Obstacles to Expand Services in an Embedded Librarian Program

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14th Off-Campus Library Services Conference
April 29, 2010
Goal of Embedded Librarianship

To Make Course-related research

Easier

Immediate

Relevant
Embedded Librarianship

- Addresses Observed Shift in Usage
- Confirms Customized Content in CMS Is the Right Approach
- Reference Questions Down
- Library Website is Not Primary Research Starting Point
Steven Bell observes:

“Put simply, the library portal as we know it today is unsustainable. It, along with a host of other indicators such as declines in reference questions and shifts from print to e-resources, signals that for academic libraries a ‘let’s just keep doing business as usual’ mentality is a sure path to obsolescence.”

Doubling Web-based courses
New 4 year degree: Bachelor of Integrative Studies
Online Registered Nurse Bachelor’s Completion Program
Expanding from 2 to 3 regional locations
Inspired at 13th OCLS Conference

Campus Flowering in 2008
Embedded Librarian Program Launched, Spring 2009

- University Regional Campus
- Open-access, Commuter Campus
- Off-Campus, Online, & Traditional Courses
- Upper & Lower Division, All Disciplines
- Virtual Library Open 24/7
- Customized Content within Familiar CMS
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original Pilot, Spring 2009</th>
<th>Second Semester, Fall 2009</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 Embedded Librarians &amp; 10 Faculty</td>
<td>2 Embedded Librarians &amp; 11 Faculty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reaching 19 sections of 13 different courses</td>
<td>Reaching 19 sections of 11 different courses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Serving 272 students</td>
<td>Serving 265 students</td>
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### Third Semester, Spring 2010
- 2 Embedded Librarians & 14 Faculty
- Reaching 24 sections of 17 different courses
- Serving 500 students
Embedded Librarianship:

- Marketing Campaign
- Individual Consultations to Determine Needs
- Creation of Customized Content
  - Captivate Screencasts
  - Research Databases
  - Links
  - Research Strategies
  - Handouts
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>INTERACTIONS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Located on Embedded Librarian Page</td>
<td>Announcements Emailed to Class</td>
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<tr>
<td>Located by Assignment</td>
<td>Discussion Board Comments</td>
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<td>Individual Emails, Telephone Calls, Drop-Ins</td>
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<td>Research Consultations</td>
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<td>Classroom Instruction</td>
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Expanded Blackboard
Embedded Librarianship 2009

- LibGuides - Interactive, Online Subject Guides
- Video on Demand
- Scanning Electronic Reserves
- F2F Classroom Instruction as requested
Embedded Librarian Tour

- BIS 401 (Hybrid) Decision Making, Integrative Studies
- BTE 105 (Online) Marketing
- ECO 131 Economic Perspectives on Inequality in the United States
- ENG 215/313 Technical Communications
- ENG 490 Literature of the Celtic Tiger
- HST 386 Race in U.S. History
- NSG 430 (Online) Nursing Care Aggregates: Families and Communities
- PSY 111 Introduction to Psychology
Staff Layoffs, Budget Cuts, & Administrative Reorganization

Triple Threat
Reduced Staffing

• National Recession
• State of Ohio Budget Cuts
• 1st Time Ever Layoffs @ 200 Year Old University
• Half-time Classified Staff Position Cut
• Public Services Librarian Leaves; Position Frozen
Budget Cuts

- Statewide Public University System Budget Cut
- University Budget Reduced by 7% during the Recession & $10 Million over 2 Years
- OhioLINK Budget Reduced by State
  - Subscriptions to Databases threatened
Administrative Reorganization

- Miami Regionals System – 3 Locations As Single Academic Unit
- Search for Dean of Regional Campuses
- Miami Middletown Interim Dean
- Miami University Provost Search
- OhioLINK Interim Executive Director
- New State Librarian
Project Information Literacy & Embedded Librarianship

Progress Report December 1, 2009: “Lessons Learned: How College Students Seek Information in the Digital Age”
Thought-provoking Findings:

- “Librarians were tremendously underutilized by students.”
- Instructors coach students through research process.
- Librarians charged to initiate dialogue with faculty to close the growing divide.
Leap Into Action to Support Academic Achievement.

Librarian-Faculty Collaboration through Blackboard Addresses this Gap
Students Do Use

- Online Scholarly Research Databases @ 84%
- Online Public Access Catalog @ 78%
- Ask a Librarian @ 12%
Students Need Help With:

- “Big picture context”
- “Information-gathering context”
- Narrowing topics
- Finding relevant resources
- Sorting through too many results
- Evaluating credibility of sources used
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIBRARIANS FAVOR</th>
<th>STUDENTS FAVOR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thoroughness</td>
<td>Brevity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Consensus</td>
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<td>Currency</td>
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<td>Efficiency</td>
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Assessing Embeddedness

- At end of each semester (Spring 2009 to present)
- Formal web-based surveys:
  - Faculty members
  - Students
- Informal discussions among librarians
Faculty Results – Fall 2009

- 16 questions – 5-point Likert scale
- 54.5% of faculty responded
- All faculty would:
  - Agree collaboration in course was favorable
  - Repeat the experience with future classes
  - Recommend embedded service to their colleagues
- Two-thirds saw improvement in current students’ research behavior (when compared to that of previous semesters)
Faculty Results – Fall 2009

- **Strengths:**
  - Introduced new library resources to students
  - Reinforced instructor’s expectations for research
  - E.L. impacted design of research assignments
  - Coverage of course-specific resources
  - Students chose more sophisticated search strategies

- **Areas for improvement:**
  - More coverage of web site evaluation methods
  - Regular updates of technology breakdowns or interface changes
  - Increase reminders of citation resources
Student Results – Fall 2009

- 11 questions, mostly 5-point Likert scale
- 5.7% response rate

Positive student reactions:
- Viewed embedded librarian resources (87%)
- Used new databases or websites in research (73%)
- Would like an E.L. in future classes (73%)
- Found the E.L. helpful to have (67%)
Student Results – Fall 2009

• Areas for improvement:
  ▪ Contacted the E.L. for assistance (27%)
  ▪ Satisfied with assistance received (47%)
  ▪ E.L. resources made research easier/less frustrating (47%)
  ▪ Many students did not discover/use E.L. resources until end of semester

• Need to increase promotion of resources/services among students
Student Results – Fall 2009

- Placement of resources:
  - 67% wanted resources linked next to assignments (71% in Spring 2009)

- Communication preferences:
  - Email was first choice of 73% of students (80% in Spring 2009)
Trends from Spring to Fall 2009

- Student response rate stagnant at 6%; overall increase in positive responses

- Students twice as likely to contact the E.L. (12% Spring to 27% Fall)

- Less satisfied with help from E.L. (63% Spring to 47% Fall)

- Less satisfied with E.L. resources (65% Spring to 47% Fall)
Assessment

- Key to shaping E.L. services
- Every semester – students and faculty
- Further assessment development:
  - Compare faculty and student perceptions in E.L. classes and F2F instruction classes
  - Compare student performance on research assignments in E.L. and non-E.L. courses
Distance Learning Development

- Creative spark to create content
- Builds talents and methods that impacts embedded assistance for all types of classes
- Synergy of instructional methods
Collaboration Among Librarians

- Community of embedded practice
- Work with other libraries at MU: LibGuides
- Drawing from online tutorial collections: Animated Tutorial Sharing Project (http://ants.wetpaint.com)
Collaboration Beyond the Library

- University and campus units
- Marketing and financial support: Center for Teaching and Learning
- Inspiration: Center of Online Learning
- Technology support: Educational Technology Coordinator
New Library Services

- Distance learning course support (other than embedded librarianship)
- Scanning items for faculty (e-reserves and beyond)
- Video on Demand
- Copyright and plagiarism consultations
Persist in Marketing Reference

- Adoption of services takes time
- Embedded classes as marketing arena
- Email, instant messaging, and text
- Research consultations
Collaboration with Faculty

- Connect library services to class assignments and outcomes
- Spontaneous interventions
- Eventual impact on assignment design
- Spread of information literacy in coherence with course content
Commit to Embed

- If you believe . . .
- Change focus of library staff
- Student interaction and course support
- Do whatever it takes
The Future

- Increased participation and new courses
- Altered work focus
- Adding a librarian
- Continuing to understand limits and move beyond them
- Our integral mode of delivering library resources and services
Questions?

Presentation available at http://tinyurl.com/OCLS2010