Beyond Research Assistance: Developing a Partnership with Your Embedded Librarian

Erin Owens, Associate Professor / Scholarly Communications Librarian
Ashley B. Crane, Assistant Professor / Research & Instruction Librarian
Context for Discussion
Teaching Information Literacy

- Librarians are trained to teach students about research and information literacy—how to identify, evaluate, critically select, and use information resources appropriately.

- This often takes the form of:
  - Providing one-time class presentations on how to find books and articles for your assignment
  - Creating online research guides to link students to key resources in a subject area
  - Consulting individually with students who are struggling with their research

- But these mark only the beginning of what we can do to further your students’ information literacy skills...
Moving Beyond the Basics
Starting with Your Teaching Goals

- What are your priorities for students’ information literacy skills development in this course?

- Where have you seen student “pain points”?
  - Where do students struggle the most in assignments that involve finding, evaluating, and synthesizing information resources?
  - Where do students seem most in need of further development in information literacy?
  - What course content items (readings, videos, etc.) seem to “click” with students, and which fail to fully engage?

- How could a librarian partner with you to address these challenges and meet your goals?
Building on Critical Concepts

- We can develop **add-on modules** (graded or ungraded) to drive home key information literacy concepts, such as:
  - Nature and identification of scholarly sources
  - Evaluating sources, learning to recognize authority and be wary of bias, lack of evidence, etc.
  - Formulation of strong research questions
  - Conducting comprehensive literature searches
  - ...Or many other topics pertaining to critical thinking and information literacy

- Videos, interactive tutorials, quizzes—format selected to best fit the topic and your students’ learning needs.
Scaffolding Research Assignments

- We can collaborate in determining how best to **scaffold** a research assignment to maximize student success.
- We can assist in providing **constructive feedback** at stages of the assignment that involve the discovery, evaluation, and critical selection of information resources.
  - Selecting a topic and formulating a research question
  - Development of search strategies and initial bibliography of sources
  - Final bibliography of sources
Reframing Research Assignments

- We can collaborate with you in reframing research assignments to:
  - Clarify assignment goals
  - Improve student understanding of how to proceed
  - Better fit the available information resources, thus setting students up for more success
Reframing Research Assignments

- Example: An existing assignment requires students to consult print issues of scholarly or trade journals in a certain field, but these are increasingly difficult to find in an age of electronic subscriptions.

- What is the actual goal to be achieved and the skills to be developed by the students?

- How could the assignment be reframed to still fulfill this goal while allowing students to leverage the library’s more plentiful electronic journals?
Reframing Research Assignments

- Example: Reframing traditional research papers with a problem-based learning (PBL) approach.
  - Write an 8-10 page paper on biodiversity.
- Many students lack the foundational understanding for how to approach a traditional research paper (depending on their past experience).
  - Who is my audience? What is my ultimate purpose in writing this paper? How should I structure it?
- Reframe to provide students with a real audience, purpose, and suggested structure.
  - Prepare a proposal for your college administration outlining specific steps to help cultivate more diverse plant life on campus.

Fresh Approaches to Course Content

- **Supplementing Content**
- How well are your students engaging with and comprehending course content such as supplemental readings and videos?
  - Monitoring understanding and confusion in Discussion Board posts
  - Track Number of Views in Blackboard for usage statistics
- Have you been using the same reading for years and feel it’s time for something fresh?
- Working with your syllabus and goals, we can recommend additional readings and videos from library resources that will engage students with concepts from new and/or more diverse perspectives.
Fresh Approaches to Course Content

- Replacing Content

- Are your students reading the textbook? Are they even buying it?
  - 65% of students reported skipping a course textbook in 2014, despite 94% of them worrying this would harm their grade.

- We can work with you to replace your textbook with library resources and/or freely available content (such as open educational resources, OER), so that all students have a better opportunity to engage with course content, regardless of financial resources.
Conversation Is Key

- Start a conversation with your subject librarian about your goals, priorities, and student “pain points” to begin exploring opportunities for collaboration.
  - Find your librarian at: http://library.shsu.edu/about/subject.html
- Not every subject librarian may have experience in all these areas yet, but our librarians will also collaborate to and share skills to better support your needs.
Questions?
Think!

- Consider an existing aspect of your course involving information resources, information evaluation, or information literacy skills.
  - Could it be redeveloped in collaboration with an embedded librarian? How?

- Consider an aspect of your course you would like to modify to involve information resources, information evaluation, or information literacy skills.
  - Could an embedded librarian collaborate with you in this redevelopment? How?
Pair!

- Find a partner
- Discuss your course and opportunities for possible redevelopment
- Work together to address any concerns you might have
Tell us about how you could redevelop your course in collaboration with an embedded librarian.
Thank you for attending!
Image Sources

- Slide 17 - https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Knowledge-sharing.jpg
- Slide 18 - https://mobilejazz.com/blog/how-to-make-your-app-go-viral/