The Year in Review: Best Practices for Embedded Librarians

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Available at: https://works.bepress.com/amy_york/8/
RODP Embedded Librarians 2011

Survey Results and Best Practices

By Amy York, MTSU
What does an EL do?

• Manage discussion board for research questions

• Answer emails from students/faculty

• Post tutorials, guides, relevant resources, etc
RODP Embedded Librarians

- Faculty Add Form: http://vl.rodop.org/
- Approximately 25 librarians involved in the past year
- Survey sent to embedded librarians
  - results on next slides
PREPARATION

• #1-- Feel prepared to be embedded? – Yes, 14 – No, 1

More prepared: embedded librarian mentor, DE-focused conferences
Course Load

How many online classes are you typically embedded in per semester (RODP plus your home school)?

10+ classes:
- Last year, 2
- This year, 4

Is there an upper limit? Do you ever turn away courses?
Assignments

What is most important?

If you answered Always or Sometimes to #5, did you

Discuss the assignment with the instructor?

Develop pathfinders or guides for the assignment?

Ask students about their understanding of the assignment?

Ask the students about their particular topics they chose?

Prepare any tutorials?

Link or embed any tutorials?

What is most important?
# Tutorials and Pathfinders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHAT</th>
<th>HOW</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career Resources</td>
<td>Camtasia -- screencasting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical Newspapers</td>
<td>Jing (free) -- example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessing and Using Databases</td>
<td>LibGuides -- example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation Information</td>
<td>MERLOT Content Builder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Google Scholar</td>
<td>Libdata Course Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic Guides</td>
<td>D2L Content Page</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Should we all create Pathfinders?  
Work with Course Designer to make it permanent?
Communication

How do you communicate with students in online courses?

- Email
- Discussion board (one for library or research questions)
- Phone
- D2L news items
- Face-to-face consultations
- Discussion board (non-librarian board)
- Chat/IM

Discussion board: Is it worth it?
Pathfinder + Email/phone/chat = no?
How often do students contact you?

On average, how often do/did students contact you to ask questions?

- A few times a week
- A few times per semester
- A few times a month
- Hardly ever or never
- Every day

What do you do if you don’t hear from students for a long time?
What do you assume if there are no questions?
Q11: What sorts of questions do you get?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Response Percent</th>
<th>Response Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>navigational (e.g., how do I get to [x] database?)</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>procedural (e.g., how do I check out books?)</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>resource suggestions (e.g., how do I find information on [x]?)</td>
<td>55.6%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assignment clarification</td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>citation</td>
<td>61.1%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no questions</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>answered question</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skipped question</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you grade any assignments?

• Yes – 2
• No – 13

Opportunity: Bibliography checker
What extra resources do instructors list?

If you answered Yes to the previous question, what kinds of resources have you noticed?

Do you ever suggest resources for the instructor to list? Or ask for permission to edit the resources page?

Pathfinder to the rescue!
Do you formally assess the service?

- Faculty: 4/15
- Students: 5/15

Should we evaluate our service? How often?

[Link to my survey]
Q16: Effort for most time consuming class, on a scale of 1-10
Further thoughts?

I really like being an embedded librarian. I wish I could do more, and get professors to use library databases more for assignments.

It is time to streamline the process using course-specific guides and to stop checking in to each class each day.

• It is very time-consuming, yet very rewarding…RODP should give us Skype and Elluminate options and training. D2L doesn’t allow you to communicate with students at the same time in the discussion forums. I was in 10 classes of the same course and had to post 10 different times on the discussion boards for the same information. This is primitive.

• There are many different models and I don't think we should seek a "one approach fits all" approach. The potential of embedded librarianship programs is in the library's flexibility to provide collections and services tailored to the specific needs of our faculty and students.
Best Practices – Last Year

• Contact the instructor
  – explain what you can do for him/her
  – ask what the instructor needs from you

• Communicate with students
  – send group emails
  – set up discussion board
  – create multiple discussion threads
  – help students understand your role
  – create D2L news item (with instructor permission)
  – investigate LiveRoom or other synchronous contact options
  – be succinct
• Be proactive
  – provide customized pathfinder (email, discussion post, or tutorial) and let students know about it
  – add to the discussion by suggesting articles and other sources
• Be prompt
  – RODP policy: respond w/in 48 hours
  – probably best to check in daily
  – forward D2L emails to campus email (always answer in D2L)
• Suggest resources to instructor
  – contact master course creator

—Any Others?