THE SWEET SPOT
ENGAGING STUDENTS WITHIN THE LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AS AN EMBEDDED LIBRARIAN

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I work online full-time. Saint Leo University is in Florida and I work remotely from my home in Virginia.
Embedded


Many kinds of librarians can be embedded, academic, public, special collections.

The term is most often associated with academic librarians embedded in the learning management system, such as Canvas or Blackboard.
Location, Location, Location

One of the most important aspects of being embedded is the concept of bringing the library and support to the location of the people you are trying to reach.

- Online embedded librarians have access to online classrooms, learning management systems, and other online systems in order to engage with students, faculty, and the academic community.
- Physically embedded librarians can visit classrooms or other physical spaces to spend time with students, faculty, and others in person.
- Hybrid embedded librarians may be able to visit a physical location but are also embedded in an online course or system.
What do they do?

- Work within learning management systems like Canvas, Blackboard, Brightspace, Google Classroom or other online systems
- Communicate with students and faculty to proactively market their services
- Collaborate with faculty, departments, and the academic community
- Provide quality instruction to whole classes, small groups, or individuals
- Provide professional development to faculty, team members, and others in the institution or organization.
- Provide research expertise and function as an information specialist within certain departments or majors
ACRL Standards

- Advocates for the distance learning community
- Establishes a culture of support for distance learners
- Surveys students and faculty on a regular basis to determine the effectiveness of services
- Reviews library services and operations which support distance learners to determine areas for improvement
- Ensures the provision of electronic resources
- Promotes support services for distance learners
- Participates in curriculum development and course design
- Ensures ADA compliance
- Integrates information literacy in courses and provides instruction

ACRL Standards for Distance Learning Library Services, 2016, 2023)
How Do They Do It?

• utilize communication tools within the learning management or other online system, such as discussion boards, and email lists
• answer questions via email, phone, text, chat widget, live streaming services such as Zoom
• utilize online services to provide instruction or professional development to large groups, small groups, or individuals using Zoom, Google Meets, Microsoft Teams

• create learning materials such as video tutorials, documents, slideshows, LibGuides for asynchronous instruction
• work with design teams to improve current courses or online systems
• work with faculty and learning design teams to create new courses or assignments
• assess student learning
• conduct surveys to determine satisfaction with services and seek improvements
Advantages

- fosters a sense of community and caring
- may help library anxiety
- librarians get to the heart of the classes and assignments
- collaborate with faculty and course designers
- Proactively provide answers to questions
Challenges

- Workload issues; trying to serve online communities and on campus
- Working solo or lack of collaboration with other departments of the university
- Lack of access to students or limited roles in the learning management system
- Lack of resources to create learning modules, digital learning objects, tutorials, and videos, expected to use free software
- Lack of training or preparation.
- Communication with and expectations of faculty
- (Reed et al., 2022; Withorn & Willenborg, 2020)
Best Practices

- VERY IMPORTANT - If you were not requested by faculty, be sure and introduce yourself and explain your role in the course FIRST before you touch anything in the course
- Introduce yourself to students with a video that can be posted in the course and emailed to students
Best Practices

- Look carefully at assignments, due dates, discussion posts, syllabus, course links
- Plan ahead target and tailor your support for students
- Create learning materials for the course video tutorials LibGuides
Best Practices

Email students weekly or regularly with links, reminder how to get help

If you are able to have a discussion forum Ask Your Librarian post each week or regularly

Offer to teach at least one library research lesson or APA/MLA Format with Zoom or other virtual meeting
Best Practices

Help individual students with virtual reference meetings, phone, email, apps

Point students to library resources and services, chat, virtual reference, interlibrary loan, LibGuides, video tutorials, workshops
Best Practices

Assess learning during lessons with polls, surveys, quizzes

Send a short survey to every student with virtual reference meetings

End-of-course surveys and remind students to contact you or the library
So, You Want to be Embedded?

- Find one faculty member to get started, "sweetly" explain how awesome it would be if you were embedded in their class.
- Present a professional development session on the topic for faculty.
- Show the articles with data that show that being embedded improves student work, helps the faculty, reduces library anxiety, helps create a sense of belonging. (use the QR code for the link to a huge list of references)
- Talk to your library director about the option.
- Start with a low level of being embedded. Request links to LibGuides, link to library chat, post other contact information.
The Future

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion; recruit and retain a diverse workforce (Xu & Luhrs, 2020)
- Say "yes" culture is not sustainable; returning to normal workloads has been difficult (Reed et al., 2022)
- The "great resignation" affecting staffing (Falcone & McCartin, 2022)
- Low student enrollments in higher ed. (Kamssu & Kouam, 2021)
- Budget freezes or cuts affecting staffing and technology such as electronic resources, databases and ebooks (Parrott, 2022)
- Shifting landscape of library-centered access to open access (Schlak & Macklin, 2022)
- Continued support of students and their wellbeing and mental health (Appleton, 2022)
Thank You

Contact Me

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link to references