Curriculum-Based Library Instruction: From Cultivating Faculty Relationships to Assessment

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Editors
Preface

Instruction is a major component of the services offered by an academic library, and with the explosion of information sources and databases quality instruction continues to become more and more important. It is often assumed that students are prepared for the rigors of higher education, when in actuality they are frequently lacking the necessary information literacy skills to become adept researchers.\(^1\) Students are often functioning with below adequate skills and rely on their own knowledge and that of their peers when seeking library related information.\(^2\)

The rampant nature of technology has caused a shift in information seeking behaviors. In addition, current trends such as evidence based medicine and information literacy mean that one time instructional sessions cannot provide our patrons with all of the skills they need. For this reason, many librarians are working to develop curriculum based instruction that is semester long or consisting of many sessions throughout an academic program. In addition to teaching, librarians are also becoming embedded in the curriculums they support by serving as web-based course designers, problem-based learning facilitators, or members of curriculum committees.

Although it is fairly obvious that library instruction is important and that librarians should be equipped to provide this instruction, the majority of ALA accredited programs offer only one course on library instruction, the courses are only available as electives, and they are often only offered once a year.\(^3\) As stated by McAdoo and supported by the fact that instructional tracks are virtually non-existent in library schools, librarians need to gain their instructional experiences through real life experiences, mentors, and of course, books like this one.\(^4\)

Many books commonly discuss one-shot sessions and provide tips for getting the most out of that type of instruction. There are not as many that discuss curriculum based instruction in
a section, let alone an entire book. This book will encourage readers to move past the one-shot instructional sessions by providing best practices and examples of ways that other librarians have established curriculum based programs. It will also discuss some of the basic principles for instruction in an effort to appeal to those who are novices or experts in library instruction. Furthermore, this book will use case studies to explore and discuss the expanding roles of librarians in the curriculum of higher education settings.

Librarians are considered to be embedded in the curriculum or providing curriculum based instruction when they are fulfilling roles such as but not limited to: semester long or multi-session instructor, web-based course designer, problem-based learning facilitator, and/or member of a curriculum committee. In addition to describing the roles that librarians have in supporting curriculum, this book describes how to carry out those roles with sections devoted to adult learning theory, teaching methods, developing learning objectives, and working with faculty to develop curriculum. Case studies of library sessions devoted to information literacy, evidence based practice, and biomedical informatics are also included. In addition, the importance of context appropriate assessment and evaluation is discussed. This book will not be limited to one mode of delivering information and will cover examples of face to face, distance and blended learning initiatives.

This book is broken down into six parts. The first part focuses on the initial process of becoming involved with faculty and provides stories and tips for becoming a part of a curriculum committee or working to increase the amount of time students spend in library instruction sessions. The second part of the book is concentrated on learning theories such as adult and active learning. The third part of the book is focused on instructional techniques. It includes chapters on audience response systems, team based learning, etc. The fourth part is based on
modes of instruction and assessment, and full chapters are devoted to current trends such as online instruction and blended learning. The fifth and sixth parts of this book are introductions to evidence based practice, information literacy, and bioinformatics and include case studies that describe in detail how to carry out subject specific curriculum based instruction. These parts focus on health sciences and other disciplines respectively. With this book and a little bit of determination, you will be well on your way to designing your own curriculum based library instruction program.


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