Integrated, Embedded, and Case-Based: Selling Library Instruction to the Business School

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Introduction

Brigham Young University (BYU), located in Provo, Utah, is home to the Marriott School of Management, which has an enrollment of 1,900 undergraduate and 1,100 graduate students. Nearly 75 percent are bilingual, 20 percent speak a third language, and approximately 10 percent are foreign citizens.

In the year 2000, the Tanner Management Library was displaced from the Marriott School and incorporated into the Harold B. Lee Library, BYU's main campus library. Without a physical presence in the business school, BYU's business librarians have struggled to remain relevant to a faculty and student body that is increasingly dependent on the Internet for their information needs. Library instruction has proved the most effective avenue for outreach, and efforts include both new and traditional channels: requiring library instruction programmatically, integrating library instruction sessions into specific courses, embedding librarians into course management software (Blackboard), and organizing a series of open clinics held within the business school.

Programmatic Library Instruction

Library instruction for the Marriott School has traditionally been either intra-curricular or inter-curricular (Wang, 2007). Intra-curricular instruction is achieved as a programmatic component of Management Communication 320 (MCOM 320), a required course for all undergraduate business majors that also fulfills the advanced writing requirement for general education. Library instruction for MCOM 320 started in 2001 with five classes, and by 2007 it had increased to 75 library instruction sessions with 1,800 students per year. Instruction consists of a 40-minute demonstration of business resources, search strategies, online information access, and practice in evaluating and citing

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business resources. Instruction varies, depending on the needs of each section, and is conducted during a regularly scheduled class period. The 40-minute presentation is follow by a 50-minute hands-on session. For those students who need additional help, the business librarian offers four open labs, which are two hours each. Attendance to these labs is voluntary, no registration is required and students receive one-on-one assistance. About 200 students attend these labs each semester. The business librarians are also available for student consultations in person, by phone, and via e-mail.

Because this type of instruction is oriented around actual assignments and research projects, it has proven to be the best way to engage business students with library resources. In a survey conducted during Fall Semester 2007, 44.5% of students responded that the most important knowledge they had gained from the instruction was about what business databases were available. Other responses indicated that students had learned how to find articles or specific journals and how to use the bibliographic utility RefWorks (see Table 1).

Table 1: Attendee responses to the open response question: "What did you learn from the library instruction that you did not already know?

Business databases available	Find articles	Find an specific journal	RefWorks	Total respondents
89	55	21	35	200
44.5%	27.5%	10.5%	17.5%	100%

Many of the Marriott School's graduate students received their bachelor degrees from other universities and, therefore, do not receive library instruction through the MCOM 320 program. A one-hour library instruction session is offered to MBA students during orientation week and students in the Executive MBA program receive half-hour sessions at the beginning of each year of their program. Master's of Public Administration (MPA) students attend a 90-minute session during a required first-year course, Communication in Public Administration (MPA 662). A second session is provided for foreign-born students (both MBA and MPA) to address their specific research needs.

COURSE-INTEGRATED INSTRUCTION

Beyond the programmatic instruction of MCOM 320 and the introductory sessions for graduate students, inter-curricular or course-integrated instruction is provided at the request of professors. These sessions are typically built around specific course assignments. This approach is effective because it places library instruction in its natural context of helping students achieve the learning objectives of their regular courses rather than inventing pretexts under which library use and instruction can be required. Unfortunately, because these sessions are not required programmatically, they result only from the outreach and relationship-building of the librarians with the teaching faculty.

THE EMBEDDED LIBRARIAN

BYU's business librarians continue to look for new ways to deliver "just-in-time" library instruction. With the "embedded librarian" model, librarians are embedded in Blackboard (BYU's course management software) to provide instruction at the time of need. The 295 business courses using Blackboard have a direct link to the library's business pages. Some instructors give librarians access to course tools, allowing them to send announcements, add links to library resources, participate in discussion boards, create virtual classrooms, offer online office hours, and deliver online tutorials.

The effectiveness of this approach hinges on the degree to which Blackboard is integrated in the course. Many MCOM 320 courses use it extensively, and the model has proven successful (see Figure 1). In courses where Blackboard is used only as a repository for course materials or as a bulletin board, the librarian's efforts may be restricted to posting announcements or research guides. Attempts to take advantage of further functionality, such as discussion boards, have little chance for success unless the professor has already established those tools as regular features of his or her course.

BUSINESS RESEARCH CLINICS

The fourth approach to library instruction pursued at BYU is extracurricular, in the form of open-door clinics inspired by Home Depot (20 Years of Clinics, 2002). The objective is to meet a need expressed by students for additional formal opportunities to learn what resources the library offers and how to use them. In an effort to bring the library to the students, these clinics are conducted within the business school rather than the library. The unique challenge of this model is that participation is voluntary and attendance is dependent on the effectiveness of librarians' promotional efforts.

In April 2007, the Marriott School's Curriculum Committee accepted a proposal to begin a series of Business Research Clinics. Librarians prepared a schedule and curriculum, developed promotional materials, and designed a survey to assess the program's success (see attached Exhibit 1). Fifty-three people attended the first clinic on September 12, but attendance steadily declined throughout the semester. Two of the final three clinics were postponed as librarians retooled the program for Winter Semester, in which it achieved more consistent success. Lessons learned about scheduling, promotions, and pedagogy contributed to this turnaround, and credit must be given to Angela K. Horne, whose experience with a similar program as Director of the Management Library at Cornell University's Johnson School informed some of the adjustments made in scheduling and promotions at BYU.

LESSONS LEARNED: SCHEDULING

During Fall Semester, clinics ran every other week. Students reported that clinics late in the semester are more difficult to attend because of the increasing pressure of project deadlines and final exams. In one instance, a clinic was unintentionally scheduled in conflict with a popular student competition. To resolve such problems, clinics are now scheduled

Figure 1: A librarian embedded in course management software

once a week through the first half of the semester, before students become overburdened. Greater care is taken to avoid scheduling conflicts by actively linking clinics with the Marriott School's calendar. For example, librarians consulted with the Faculty Advisor for the annual Business Plan Competition and scheduled an entrepreneurship clinic in conjunction with a competition workshop. As a result of the awareness raised by this partnership, 71 people attended the clinic.

Although surveys indicate that 5:00 pm Wednesday is the time preferred by a majority of students, a second session for each clinic is now offered Thursdays at 11:00 am, a time reserved across campus for labs and lectures, with no regularly scheduled courses. While attendance at Wednesday sessions remains strong, just as many people attend Thursday sessions, demonstrating the need to provide options for students who might otherwise have conflicts.

LESSONS LEARNED: PROMOTIONS

Librarians must be both aggressive and creative to successfully promote extracurricular instruction. Surveys reveal the varying effectiveness of different promotional channels and the importance of a multi-channel approach (see Table 2). Clinics are advertised on the library's business website (www.lib.byu.edu/business, where handouts are also made available following clinics), through fliers distributed during events like the Business Plan Competition or in common areas in the library and the Marriott School, and through large posters positioned at entrances and in the atrium of the Marriott School (see Figure 2). Attendees are invited to sign up to receive e-mail notices of future clinics. E-mail announcements are sent to faculty and to leaders of student organizations, encouraging them to recommend the clinics to their students and constituents.

Table 2: Attendee responses to the question: "How did you learn about this clinic?"

E-mail List	Fliers	Posters	Professors	Other students	Website	Total
33	15	69	113	14	1	210
15.7%	7.1%	32.9%	53.8%	6.7%	0.5%	100%

53.8% of survey respondents learn about clinics from professors—more than any other channel—but even this high figure does not adequately represent the importance of professor recommendations in promoting clinic attendance. On several occasions, professors have made attendance at clinics mandatory. When this would exceed the room's seating capacity, additional clinic sessions have been scheduled during that professor's regular class period. Faculty members sometimes attend clinics themselves and subsequently invite librarians to conduct sessions within their classes. Librarians have also invited faculty and staff from the Marriott School to join in team-teaching certain clinics. (See Figure 2 on the top of the right column for poster example)

In this way, clinics raise awareness and open doors, putting librarians inside classrooms they have not previously visited and forging new relationships between faculty and librarians. These collateral benefits highlight the intangible impact of the clinics and indicate the clinics' fledgling success

in helping restore the library to the consciousness of Marriott School faculty and students.

Figure 2: A clinic poster
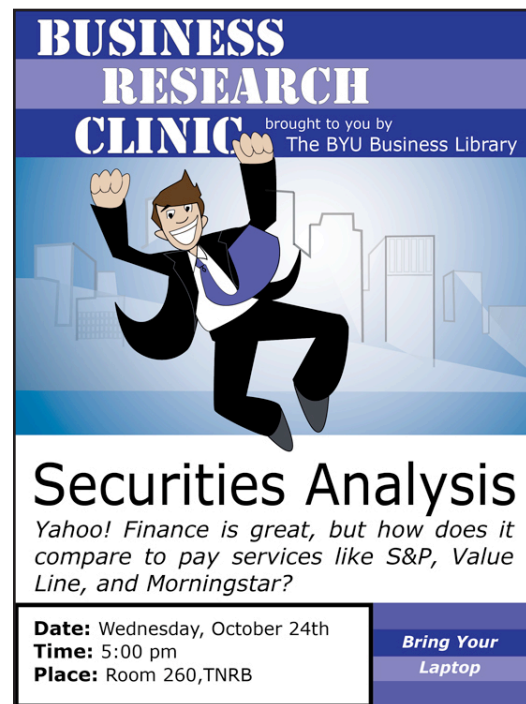
LESSONS LEARNED: PEDAGOGY

Another success factor that grew in response to feedback is a transition in pedagogical models. Comments on surveys, like, "The meeting contained too much info too quickly. We had so many options and I can't remember where to go to research a certain topic," have led librarians to focus on fewer resources per clinic, resisting the impulse to try to show students everything the library has to offer.

Other suggestions, like, "Maybe have a specific comp./industry that you can follow thru the databases & show the diff. info you get from the diff. databases," inspired librarians to introduce a narrative arc or story-like element to the clinics, reorienting instruction around the information need rather than the database, the content rather than the container. This has evolved into what one survey respondent called "mini-cases" with "little goals to keep interest."

Adopting a case-based methodology makes sense for students whose coursework is structured around case studies, typified by the Harvard Business School Cases used in many business schools. However, this model does not readily translate to library instruction. Such case studies are usually self-contained, including all pertinent information, and students are often prohibited from looking at outside information sources. The purpose of such studies is to immerse students in a complex situation in which they can apply the tools they have acquired.

Case-based library instruction inverts this model. The focus is on identifying what kinds of information would meet

the needs of the case and exploring library and Internet resources to obtain such information. The clinic on international business is a typical example. The premise is that "MicroSoniDo's game console is a hit in the U.S. Now you must research foreign markets and decide where to launch the product next."

The case-study approach allows principles of information literacy to be introduced naturally. A discussion of the kinds of information that will be useful for this scenario results in factors such as the demographics and prosperity of candidate nations' populations, the competitive environment, and the regulatory environment. This is followed by a discussion differentiating primary and secondary research and what kinds of information are available through the library. Qualitative discussions about free versus licensed resources are of particular interest to students who will soon be graduating but expect to experience similar information needs during their professional careers.

Next a source for demographic and economic data is demonstrated. Attendees are then given several minutes to explore the resource with a specific objective in mind, in this case, to identify a handful of nations with demographics and economics conducive to a product launch. A similar pattern of demonstration and exercise is followed for a source of market and competitive analyses as well as for a source on regulatory environments.

This case is structured as a country-screening exercise, but as with all clinics, the objective is not to teach students how to conduct an analysis (that's their professors' job), but how to gather and assess information they would need for such an analysis.

While the case-study approach requires more preparation on the part of the librarian, it correlates with more effective instruction and makes the session more engaging for attendees. This is demonstrated by comments on surveys from student attendees—"The role-play scenario was helpful!"—and from professors—"I like that you're doing this and have heard good things from students attending when you do a case study."

Survey questions one, two, and three, where respondents are asked to rate their overall experience, the content of the clinic, and the instructors on a one-to-seven Likert scale, also reflect modest but notable differences between attendee satisfaction with clinics conducted in a traditional mode versus those organized as case studies: clinics with case studies rated 4.3% higher for overall experience, 5.2% higher for content, and 3.3% higher for instructors (see Table 3).

Table 3: Attendee satisfaction ratings for clinics with case studies versus those without

	1. Please rate your overall experience	2. Please rate the content of the clinic	3. Please rate the instructors
Average Ratings for Sessions Without Case Studies	5.38	5.59	5.85
Average Ratings for Sessions With Case Studies	5.60	5.88	6.04
% Increase of Sessions with Case Studies Over Those Without	4.3%	5.2%	3.3%

CONCLUSION

Through the first two semesters, 22 Business Research Clinics have been conducted on 13 topics. Total attendance has exceeded 400, and 92 people have added their e-mail addresses to the mailing list. The success of this extracurricular program of library instruction follows lessons learned in scheduling to accommodate students' needs and capture synergies with the Marriott School's calendar, leveraging professors' influence in promoting clinics, and adopting a case-based pedagogy that better engages students and imparts information literacy.

Embedding librarians into course management software is another attempt to bring the library to the students and, as with the clinics, its success depends on adapting to student needs and to the structures that faculty have established in their courses.

Adding these new methods to traditional programmatic and course-integrated models, BYU's librarians have found that library instruction is the most effective form of outreach and the best way for the library to reclaim a role in the business school.

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BUSINESS RESEARCH CLINIC

Participant Survey
Securities Analysis – October 24th, 2007

Thank you for attending today's Business Research Clinic. Please help us improve the clinics by completing this survey and returning it to the librarians.

1. Please rate your overall experience. (circle a number, 1=Poor, 7= Excellent)

   Poor   Average   Excellent
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

2. Please rate the content of the clinic.
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

3. Please rate the instructors.
   1   2   3   4   5   6   7

4. Will you attend future clinics? ___Yes ___No ___Depends on Topic

5. Would you recommend the clinics to others? ___Yes ___No

6. How did you learn about this clinic?
   ___Posters   ___Professors   ___I'm on the email list
   ___Fliers   ___Other students   ___Website

7. Check all that describe your program/department:
   ___MBA   Track (if applicable):
   ___EMBA   ___Entrepreneurship
   ___MPA   ___Finance
   ___EMPA   ___Marketing
   ___MAcc   ___OB/HR
   ___MISYM   ___PhD Track
   ___BS Accounting   ___Product Development
   ___BS Management   ___Supply Chain Management
   ___BS ISYS   ___Strategy
   ___Minor   ___Tax
   ___Faculty (Dept.: _____)   ___Others: _____

8. What topics or research problems would you like to see covered in future clinics?

9. Would you like to receive emails announcing future clinics?

   ___ Yes ___No ___I already do   Email address: _____

10. Please write any other comments or suggestions on the back.

Thank you for your input!