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Research Ready: Expanding the One-Shot and Collaborating for Student Success

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RESEARCH READY: EXPANDING THE ONE-SHOT AND COLLABORATING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

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THE PROBLEMS WITH ONE-SHOTS

Course-integrated instruction, or what librarians call the “one-shot,” a one-off session of librarian-led instruction within the normal run of a credit-bearing class, has long been the instructional go-to for information literacy instruction. One-shots continue to be the norm for librarians’ practice of information literacy instruction despite conflicting research on whether they are effective as an instructional format.

From the data of its initial year, 2014-2015, the Greater Western Library Alliance’s study on the impact of information literacy instruction found that “one-time library instruction” and the students’ use of research guides had a “positive association” with student retention until graduation (GWLA, 2017).

GWLA also found slightly higher GPAs and an increase of credit hours completed among first-year students who attended library instruction: “On average, *First-Year GPA* for students who attended library training was 0.02 points higher than students who did not.” Additionally, GWLA found that students who had received one-shots within one or multiple courses, “[could] be expected to complete 1.8 more credit hours than those who did not attend the training. [...] This has far-reaching implications for student 4-year and 6-year graduation rates” (GWLA, 2017, p. 3).

Yet when considering students’ engagement within one-shots, Walker and Pearce (2014) found the lasting effect of one-shot instruction to be lacking. “One 50 or 75-min library instructional session does not provide ample opportunity for substantial levels of engagement to manifest” (p. 287). To wit, “It seems reasonable that either engagement cannot occur, or that it cannot produce a lasting effect, over such a short span of time” (p. 287). The authors continue their critique:

The facts are that, in this study, students did not perform at a high level even after receiving library instruction. [...] Considering this performance is based on learning associated with only one 50-min instructional session perhaps such low scores are understandable. However, if the library wants its users to get the most out of its facilities, services, and resources, a more profound impact on information literacy is needed. (p. 287)

In his discussion of the assessment of one-shots, Wang (2016) notes “the longevity of one-shot library instruction does not make its assessment easy” (p. 620). Librarians assert that one-shot evaluation is overly complex and overly time-consuming because one-shots sessions are most commonly designed to assist students only in one specific course and for one particular assignment (Wang, 2016). He writes, “Librarians must constantly adjust to changes for different course objectives covering different library resources and skills for one-shot library instruction” (p. 620).

Reminiscent of Walker and Pearce (2014), Wang (2016) notes that unengaged or unmotivated students “create additional challenges not only for the process of data-collecting, but also for maintaining assessment as an ongoing practice” (p. 620).

Ideally, one-shots are used by librarians as an opportunity to develop relationships between themselves and the faculty and majors of a particular program. This can be as simple as a librarian introducing themselves to students, but in a survey of the LOEX

2019 presentation audience, one-shots are more commonly used for the demonstration of database interfaces and library search engines. Less often, students are taught librarian-developed assignments pertaining to transferable research skills.

What one-shots do not offer is the opportunity for librarians to develop a deeper curriculum, or measure long-term student growth and changing student needs. And while disciplinary faculty may lament their students' inexperience with entry-level practices of academic research, these faculty often do not have or cannot allow for enough course time to develop these research skills. In short, one-shots do not allow librarians time enough to teach the depth of skills students need, or allow the profession insight into long-term student growth. The result is that librarians approach instruction by teaching to the deficiencies of the format and not to student needs.

ENTER THE WORKSHOPS – SEMESTER ONE

In 2017, one of the presenting librarians with a background in credit-bearing information literacy instruction met with faculty in the university's Department of Kinesiology to discuss with them their learning outcomes and approaches to writing assignments within a discipline-based writing-intensive course. At the time, the faculty were engaged with their subject liaison (another of the session's presenting librarians) in one-shots, but wanted students to complete their courses with increased knowledge in additional areas: how to synthesize sources into paragraph form, APA paper and citation formatting, and overall construction of a thesis. These requests would have been extremely difficult to effectively condense into one or even two course-integrated instruction sessions. The discussions between librarians and disciplinary faculty made it clear that to meet the depth of student need, one-shots were not the answer.

Collaborative Instruction Planning

Librarians again met with the Kinesiology faculty to plan a series of scaffolded information literacy workshops for their students. Discussion points included:

- Which course sections to target
- Content and order of the workshops
- Timing within the semester
- Incentives for attendance

Faculty input on the series was necessary not only to ensure the series aligned with course objectives but to obtain buy-in and create a working partnership. The faculty selected four sections of 300 and 500 level upper-division writing-intensive courses required for the major. Enrollment in these courses required previous fulfillment of the general education written communication prerequisite, but faculty were still seeing poor writing comprehension and information literacy skills in their students' work. Librarians worked with faculty to review syllabi to determine student learning outcomes for each course, and align them to the library's information literacy student learning outcomes.

Formulating the Workshop Series

The workshops were hosted twice weekly for a seven-week period in the spring of 2018. These were held at two recurring times/days of the week to accommodate student schedules. Multiple librarians taught the workshops, so a common curriculum was used to ensure students would receive the same instruction regardless of which librarian was teaching a session.

Attendance was incentivized by the faculty: students in each section were required to attend at least one workshop and could obtain extra credit for attending an additional workshop. Librarians required online sign-ups ahead of time in order to meet room capacity, and provided attendance lists to the disciplinary faculty at the end of the semester. Students unable to attend a workshop due to scheduling conflicts had the option of meeting one-on-one with librarians in place of workshop attendance.

Topics

The workshop series was organized so that topics would be scaffolded as the series progressed, and also to align with assignment deadlines. The initial order of topic offerings was:

- *OneSearch* Basics
- Source Annotation & Intro to APA
- Source Synthesis

- Writing Research Questions
- Visual / Media Literacy
- APA Citations & Formatting
- Class End Project

Some notes on the selection of workshop topics: *OneSearch* is the California State University-wide library discovery tool used at Meriam Library, *Visual/Media Literacy* was specifically selected because one section's final project was a poster presentation, and the *Class End Project* sessions were work days for students to focus on their projects with librarians there to assist if necessary.

Assessment Data

At the end of the semester, librarians created an online qualitative and quantitative survey that disciplinary faculty sent to their students. *See Appendix A: Workshop Evaluation Survey*. Out of 115 workshop attendees, 60 responded for a 52% response rate. Assessment data from the first semester was overwhelmingly positive: 88% of students said that the workshops were *relevant* to their coursework, and 76% said the workshops were *helpful* to their coursework. Students also expressed a desire for more workshops throughout the semester, with an additional focus on writing and APA style. It is notable that these were the same areas that disciplinary faculty had expressed interest in early on.

READY, SET, GO? - SEMESTER TWO AND BEYOND

Adjustments were made to the workshops based on the spring assessment data, and were offered again in the fall of 2018. However, midway through the second semester, Kinesiology students expressed to their faculty feelings of being overburdened with time commitments. In response, one faculty member dropped the attendance requirement for their students. As a result, workshop attendance declined significantly. Because there was a strong chance that Kinesiology students would still show up for extra credit, the workshop sessions could not be cancelled. As a solution, librarians recognized the potential of open enrollment, and opened the already scheduled sessions to all students on campus.

Branding Your Workshop

To attract new students to the workshops, librarians reframed and rebranded the series. The series was named "Research Ready" in hopes to convey a positive, "You got this!" spin on academic research. In an effort to reach more students, librarians designed colorful and visually appealing flyers, published campus-wide announcements, and advertised the workshops on the library homepage. Some of the flyers included photos of librarians as a way to put a friendly face to the service and were displayed on monitors within the library, shared on the library's social media accounts, and posted on bulletin boards across campus. Additionally, flyers were distributed to faculty and students as handouts. *See Appendix B: Branding Your Workshop*.

Collaborations on Campus

Librarians further expanded the Research Ready brand by partnering with the campus Writing Center. Librarians nationwide have been partnering with university writing centers more frequently as a means to strengthen student writing and research skills and to promote student success (Richardson, 2018). This collaboration helps to emphasize research and writing as a recursive process. Joint workshop sessions and librarian drop-in hours are being explored at the authors' home institution, and the librarians have strengthened their relationship with the campus Writing Center by implementing a process for librarian referrals. Additionally, the workshop series was promoted in the Writing Center as a way to increase familiarity with the Research Ready offerings.

Librarians have pursued additional partners for potential collaboration. For example, the presenters' home institution of CSU, Chico is both a Hispanic-Serving Institution, with 33.3% of students identifying as Hispanic/Latinx (California State University, Chico, 2019), and a minority-majority campus, with 56% of the student population identifying as not Caucasian. Additionally, 52% of CSU, Chico students are first-generation college students (Institutional Research, 2019). Librarians reached out to the TRIO and Educational Opportunity Programs which serve first-generation and low-income students.

Lessons Learned

The major lesson learned in formulating a workshop series was that collaboration is key. Faculty buy-in is imperative because faculty hold students accountable through grading. However, based on this particular experience, the presenters encourage seeking buy-in from other campus groups as well, as this provides librarians an opportunity to work with a broader population of students. To achieve support and buy-in from various campus groups, the presenters recommend identifying shared values of student success and emphasizing the need for improved information literacy skills.

With the exception of the first semester, the presenters experienced challenges in implementing a workshop series. Those willing to initiate a new library program must be comfortable with experimenting, and recognize that collaboration in academia can be a slower than ideal process. Nevertheless, information literacy workshops can be a great way to supplement the one-shot.

LOEX DISCUSSIONS & INTERACTIVE COMPONENTS

There were two interactive components to the LOEX 2019 presentation: one in which attendees participated in a discussion about information literacy needs on their campuses, and a second in which attendees used the information given in the session in order to create a mock information literacy workshop series.

Group Reflection

The presenters first facilitated a short five to eight minute discussion focusing on two questions:

1. What are the areas of need that you see for information literacy instruction at your campus?
2. How can these concepts scaffold within a workshop series?

Attendee responses included:

- Narrowing & broadening topics
- Reading academic articles/sources
- Reading comprehension
- Resource selection & use
- Source evaluation
- Source identification
- Writing, beyond what peer tutors can assist with
- Writing skills & writing competency specifically for the discipline being taught

This discussion was notable in that many attendees had overlapping responses, which also overlapped with the common concerns and complaints heard by the presenters at their home institution.

Build Your Own Workshop Series

In the second interactive portion, the presenters prompted attendees to create their own workshop series. Presenters handed out two example syllabi for attendees to use as a basis in which to design and align their mock-up workshop series. Attendees were encouraged to work in pairs or as a table for this activity. Attendees were prompted with the following questions:

- Identify concepts present and concepts you would add: Which course & information literacy learning outcomes would you focus on?
- How would you assess the series?
- What challenges might you foresee?

The end goal of this activity was for attendees to gain insight on how to design a scaffolded information literacy workshop series. Attendees were asked to focus primarily on topic identification; sequence of topics, both in how they scaffolded and in how they would align with course/assignment deadlines; and alignment with student learning outcomes.

The presenters then facilitated a discussion among the entire group. This resulted in a robust discussion covering a variety of areas. These included:

- Challenges:
 - o How does one teach research as an iterative process?
 - o How to use writing a research question as a demonstration of this iterative process?

- Teaching Methods for Workshop Series:
 - o Employ active learning through Think-Pair-Share methods, then have students demonstrate to the larger group
 - o Have students co-teach the workshops with librarians
 - o Host entirely student-led workshops – these could be shorter, maybe 15 minutes in length
 - o Use campus writing center models which use student tutors

- Timing:
 - o Assignment timing challenges
 - o When during the semester should the series begin?

- Topic Scaffolding Sequences:
 - o One attendee shared this specific sequence: Topic selection, keyword creation/identification, how to use the institutional discovery tool, source evaluation, source synthesis, and concluding with citation formatting

- Other Topics:
 - o Annotated bibliographies: What/why/how on annotations and citations, and how does one break these lessons apart?
 - o Examine concept mapping as a way to generate keywords
 - o Research question activity: What is a research question? vs. What is a thesis?
 - o Use an image evaluation search to teach open access and Creative Commons image licenses

Discussion

A number of discussion points were issues and questions that the presenters had encountered in the initial creation of the workshop series, while others were avenues they had not considered. Take, for example, the number of suggestions for peer-tutoring and/or the use of students in teaching the workshops. This is a worthy possibility to pursue, as there are examples in the literature that demonstrate that undergraduate students are capable of not only library reference work (Faix, et al., 2009) but also information literacy instruction (Bodemer, 2014). Peer education is commonly used in many areas of higher education and is increasingly acknowledged as beneficial for numerous reasons (Wawrzynski, LoConte, & Straker, 2011).

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APPENDIX A: WORKSHOP EVALUATION SURVEY

Below is a copy of the questions and possible responses for the spring 2018 survey of student workshop participants.

Info Literacy Workshop Feedback

Thank you for attending our workshop series. Please fill this quick survey and let us know your thoughts (your answers will be anonymous).

You are enrolled in: (Select one)

KINE 320

KINE 505

Which Workshop(s) did you attend? (Select any number of responses)

Wk 1: OneSearch Basics

Wk 2: Source Annotation / APA Style

Wk 3: Source Synthesis

Wk 4: Writing Research Questions

Wk 5: Visual / Media Literacy

Wk 6: APA Citations and Paper Formatting

Wk 7: Completing Your Class End Project

Other: Individual Meeting with Librarian

Who led your workshop?

Irene

William

I don't know / Would rather not say

Was the workshop RELEVANT to your coursework?

Yes

No

Somewhat

Was the workshop HELPFUL for your coursework?

Yes

No

Somewhat

What was the most helpful part of the workshop(s) you attended? (Short answer)

What effect, if any, do you feel these workshops had on your writing ability? (Short answer)

Any overall feedback for the workshop series? (Short answer)

What other workshops would you like to have offered? (Short answer)

- If similar workshops were offered in the future, when would you like them to be held? (Short answer).

LOEX PRE-PRINT

APPENDIX B: BRANDING YOUR WORKSHOP



Figure 1: Presentation slide showing flyers and a schedule rebranding the workshops as "Research Ready."



Figure 2: Presentation slide showing a flyer and library referral card made for the campus Writing Center.