Leaving the Library: How We Improved Information Literacy by Joining Our User Communities

Nadine Anderson
Behavioral Sciences and Women's & Gender Studies Librarian
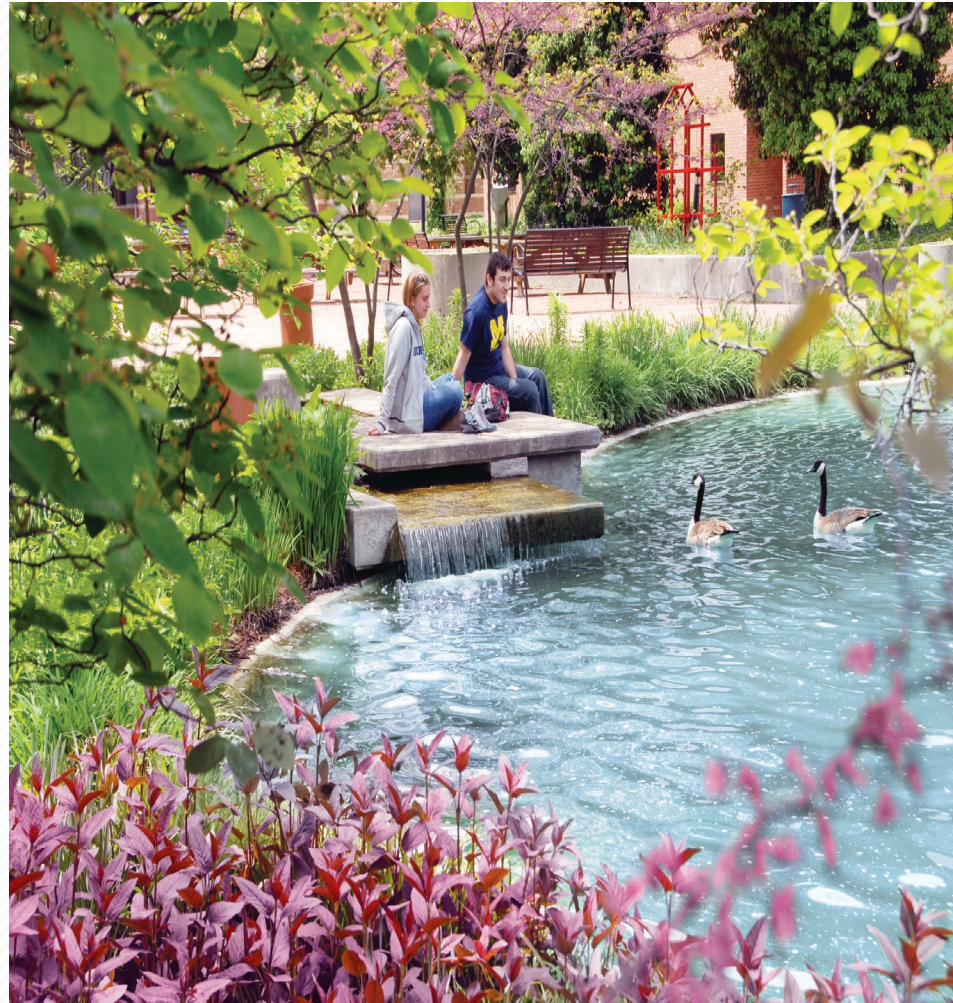University of Michigan-Dearborn
nfanders@umich.edu
@NadineFAnderson

Joel Scheuher
Business Librarian
University of Michigan
Ross School of Business
jscheuhe@umich.edu

DEARBORN
MARDIGIAN LIBRARY

MICHIGAN ROSS

University of Michigan-Dearborn

Why Leave?

- Liaison librarians in library offices
- Reactive: respond to IL requests
- Standardized one-shot sessions
- Service provider
- Reference questions down
- Library building = study space
- Becoming irrelevant to program and campus student learning goals

The Solution?

Join our user communities

Models:
- **David Shumaker**: *The Embedded Librarian: Innovative Strategies for Taking Knowledge Where It's Needed*
- **R. David Lankes**: *The New Librarianship Field Guide; Atlas of New Librarianship*

Why Join User Communities?

"When people have an information need they'll always ask people they know before they ask a librarian. The trick is making sure that librarians are some of the people they know." – Jessamyn West (pg. 83, Atlas of New Librarianship)

Joining User Communities: Process

- Office *among faculty offices*
- 60% user community/40% library split
- Posted office hours
- On program email lists
- Marketing

Joining User Communities: Strategies

- Be proactive
- Entrepreneurial mindset
- Informal needs assessment
- Troubleshooting mode
- Embrace serendipitous opportunities for partnership

Information Literacy Partnerships

Customized, Value-Added Collaborative Partnerships:
- Strategically placed in courses throughout the curriculum
- Embedded in courses and course management sites
- Develop and teach program-specific IL credit course
- Online IL tutorial development
- Course and assignment redesign projects to incorporate IL
- Honors and Graduate program research consultant

Information Literacy Outcomes

- Significantly higher number of student and faculty interactions
- LibGuide use significantly higher
- Students score significantly higher on evaluating sources compared to students in one-shots
- Pre-tests and post-tests indicate significant student research skill development
- Faculty feedback overwhelmingly positive

Kresge Library
Ross School of Business
University of Michigan

Kresge Library & Ross School Background

- 100% digital library
- 7.5 reference librarians + 1 director

Kresge Library & Ross School Background

- 4,068 students (Fall 2018)
- Programs
  - Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA)
  - Master of Business Administration (MBA)
  - Master of Supply Chain Management (MSCM)
  - Master of Management (MM)
  - Master of Accounting (MAcc)
  - PhD

Action-Based Learning

Ross Experiences in Action-Based Learning: REAL

Learning Business by Doing Business.

Action-Based Learning

- Learning by doing
  - Students are put in real-world situations, guided by faculty, with real stakes
- No case study with guidance questions
  - Teams work with real deadlines and uncertainty
  - Teams present a solution to the organization that is sponsoring the project

Multidisciplinary Action Projects (MAP)

Multidisciplinary Action Projects (MAP)

- Teams of students analyze business problems or opportunities and make recommendations for improvements
  - Students (4-6 per team)
  - Sponsor (companies, nonprofits, NGOs, government organizations)
  - Faculty advisor
  - Travel advisor
  - Communication advisor
  - Research expert (librarian)

Action-Based Learning (ABL) Programs

MAP Programs

- MBA MAP
  - Full-time (85 projects)
  - Part-time
    - Evening (10 projects)
    - Weekend (25 projects)
    - Online (TBD)
  - Global (10 projects)
  - Executive (25 projects)
    - Ann Arbor, MI (16)
    - Los Angeles, CA (9)
- Capstone MAP: BBA and Master of Mgmt. (40 projects)

Other ABL Examples

- Classes
  - ES 395 Entrepreneurial Management
  - TO 300 Business Information Systems
  - Strat 492 Dynamic Capabilities Through Corporate Development
- Real Experiences in ABL (REAL)
  - Michigan Business Challenge
  - Maize and Blue Fund
  - Erb Impact Projects
  - Zell Entrepreneurs
  - Sanger Leadership Crisis Challenge
  - Clubs, competitions, etc.

Los Angeles MAP

LA MAP – Background

- Part of the Executive MBA Program
- Launched in 2012
- Students are usually working full-time in various industries

LA MAP - Overview

- Usually 8-10 student teams
- Students, professors, and librarians convene 3 times during the fall semester

LA MAP – Librarian Role

- 1ST visit (late Oct. or early Nov.)
  - Formal one hour presentation on the afternoon of the first day
    - Showcase library databases
    - Customize examples to the sponsors' proposals
  - Visits to each team in their breakout rooms
    - Each librarian has 4-5 teams
    - Sit in on the sponsor presentation/meeting
    - Gather preliminary requests based on team meetings with the sponsor
  - Dinner with entire cohort

LA MAP – Librarian Role

- 2ND visit (late Nov.)
  - Continue to visit teams in their breakout rooms
    - Some teams may be traveling to sponsor locations
    - Address new requests based on shifting team priorities
- 3RD visit (mid Dec.)
  - Attend the final presentations
  - Wrap up dinner with faculty and support staff
- Between visits
  - Respond to the flood of information requests via email

LA MAP – Engaging Place & Practice

- We live, eat, and mingle with the students
  - Research is customized for the LA user community
- We get to meet the sponsors and hear their presentations
  - Better understanding of the project scope

LA MAP – Outcomes

- Information literacy outcomes
  - Students have a much better understanding of resources and library services
  - Students come back for library help in subsequent classes
    - "I wish I had known about the library earlier in the program."
  - Students learn of other services, i.e. career and job search assistance

LA MAP – Outcomes

- More information requests per team
  - 8.0 per AA team, 11.4 per LA team
- Library recognition
  - Teams acknowledge librarian contributions during final presentations
  - Sponsors and the faculty advisors learn about our contributions
  - Faculty become advocates of the library
    - Our research expertise is marketed as a competitive advantage to our MBA program
    - Faculty highly encourage the use of our services
  - Faculty can justify the travel cost to administration

LA MAP – Takeaways

- One-shot presentations followed by one-on-one meetings lead to much higher usage
- Living with the user community is a great way to understand their needs
  - Librarians are available and approachable
  - Feedback is immediate and in-person
  - Questions are more thoughtful and impactful
- Since the library is 100% online, it frees up the librarians to venture into the user community
- Having a physical human presence is important in a virtual world
  - It's all about relationship building

Benefits

- IL initiatives aligned with program goals and needs
- Develop strong working relationships
- Facilitates learning about culture, needs, and goals
- Grassroots IL initiatives have buy in and high impact
- Valuable partner in problem-solving and meeting goals
- Easily accessible to students and faculty
- Success snowballs

Challenges

- Success snowballs out of control
- Balancing program and library
- Out of some librarian comfort zones and skill sets

Solutions

- Stay strategic!
- Set clear boundaries
- Provide support, training, and resources

Questions?

Nadine Anderson
Behavioral Sciences and Women's &
Gender Studies Librarian
University of Michigan-Dearborn
nfanders@umich.edu
@NadineFAnderson

Joel Scheuher
Business Librarian
University of Michigan
Ross School of Business
jscheuhe@umich.edu

DEARBORN
MARDIGIAN LIBRARY

MICHIGAN ROSS