

2021 Virtual Management & Organizational Behavior Teaching Conference

Using High-level Embedded Librarianship to Enhance Student Learning and Reduce Academic Anxiety in an Online Leadership Course

Abstract

High-level embedded librarianship was integrated into an introductory leadership course to provide undergraduate students from the university's global online campus high-touch access to librarian services through a learning management platform, including active librarian presence as well as the collaborative design and librarian-led facilitation of an online discussion focused on research and academic writing. Survey results and student feedback indicated increased student engagement and reduced academic anxiety. This presentation provides an overview of embedded librarianship, the activities used in an online leadership course, its strategic use, and the benefits of using a collaborative approach as well as interactive participant dialogue.

Keywords: Embedded Librarianship, leadership education, online learners

Introduction:

Embedded librarianship is a way to have librarians actively involved in an online courses to support the online learner's ability to access and use online library resources to enhance the student's information literacy (Lysiak et al., 2018). This is a team-based approach where faculty, librarians, and instructors work together to design online course content to support student learning and engagement. Embedded librarianship was identified by the program faculty as a potential way to support adult learners in an introduction leadership course with some expressed anxiety about academic writing, research basics, and use of APA formatting. For many students, this course was their first online undergraduate course and their first course after returning to academia to complete their education. For faculty, the rationale for the use of embedded librarianship included increasing student use of library resources, enhancing student engagement with librarians, improving academic writing and research performance over time, and addressing student concerns.

A pilot study with one course section started in Fall 2019 with an enrollment of 35 undergraduate leadership students. Initially, one faculty and one librarian met over the course of a year during the course development with coordination with the program lead faculty and assigned instructional designer. Creation and integration of planned activities including an optional course discussion with a quiz to test related knowledge and librarian feedback for two assignments to support academic writing and basic research.

After three semesters of pilot study, the embedded librarianship services were adapted and made scalable to all introduction leadership courses as of Spring 2021. It currently compasses instructors for three course sections per semester and two embedded librarians.

The newest version of activities include a required librarian-led online course discussion that focuses on academic writing, research basics, and APA Style formatting with interactive peer student feedback. The results for student surveys and student feedback were increased use of program-specific LibGuides, contact with librarians, student engagement during course discussions, more ease of use with library resources and APA formatting, and reported reduced anxiety related to research and academic writing activities. Faculty were able to gather information regarding student baseline knowledge through student responses and the observed importance of student support and interaction in the learning process.

Embedded Librarianship is a way of modernizing the traditional classroom through the use of technology to provide equitable access to librarian support, equivalent to traditional methods. Through high-level embedded librarianship new technology tools are used so that online learning becomes more effective in a virtual classroom environment. This approach and designed activities were targeted towards online, non-traditional, and early undergraduate students. However, the activities are customizable for a variety of leadership and management courses from early undergraduates, late undergraduates to graduate students. It can be used for traditional and non-traditional students. It is appropriate for any virtual classroom where there is a need for use of online library resources and information literacy.

Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications

There are different levels of embedded librarianship that can be integrated in online course design (Lysiak et al., 2018). Added to this course was high-level embedded librarianship, which is based on having librarians and faculty collaborate to design and integrate customized librarian-led information literacy instruction. This provided higher-level librarian participation

than the already existing lower-level use of library links for online course material and chat function to ask for librarian support as well as the moderate level program-specific online LibGuides with tutorials to help students learn how to use library resources, conduct research, and provide APA Style citations and references. Also important for embedded librarianship is instructional design that allows students equitable access so that they have equivalent library resources and high-touch experiences as they would in a residential course. Then means that they have direct access to librarians who are familiar with their course, the online program, and directly respond to student needs. In order to “provide students with equitable access to similar programming and opportunity to build their expertise with information literacy threshold concepts, higher levels of embeddedness should be sought or developed over time for online learners” (Lysiak et al., 2018, p. 17). The team-based approach of embedded librarianship incorporates librarians along with faculty and instructional designers in the development of course content and course design (Moore & Kearsley, 2011).

Our session contributes to effective teaching and learning in the field of management because it focuses on providing equitable access in the virtual classroom to learning activities that are equivalent to the best strategies used the in-person environment supported by program-specific embedded librarianship to support academic writing and research as well as the facilitation of student engagement through the use of technology tools. The results of the high-level and high touch approach to embedded librarianship is to provide quality online instruction through librarian integration, active participation, and direct contact with students. This was the aim of Burke and Tumbleson’s (2016) Framework of Information Literacy for

Higher Education. Our session shares information with participants about the overall program and some of the specific activities used with embedded librarianship integration.

Embedded Librarianship Program Learning Objectives

- Students will understand how embedded librarianship is used to support learning facilitated by the use of technology.
- Students will participate in embedded librarianship activities to develop an understanding of the basic components and structure of academic writing, research, and APA Style citations and references supported by active librarian and faculty participation, and student support.
- Students will understand how research and academic writing can support credibility, reduce plagiarism, and strengthens one's argument.
- Students will apply basic knowledge regarding research and academic research to course discussions and assignments.
- Learners will recognize that knowledge and skill development about information literacy occur overtime through direct contact and customized instruction by faculty and librarians to meet student needs/interests and through ongoing student practice.

The teaching topics that are relevant to our session are embedded librarianship to support student learning and engagement, supporting customized online learning activities for leadership (or management) courses, equitable access for online student, and distance learning.

Exercise Overview

The exercise is presented in an online format geared towards online adult learners taking an online introduction to organizational leadership course with an enrollment of 35 students. Students learn about the embedded librarianship through course material, video presentations, librarian profiles, description of designated librarian roles presented in the course syllabus. Librarians actively engage with students in class introductions discussion and provide relevant information and personal interaction with students during the first week of the course and the librarian-led discussion in the second week of the course. In the required librarian-led online discussion, students respond to one of three prompts to use the leadership LibGuide to review and create an APA Style reference, to provide an overview the academic writing process and how it is strengthened by references, and discuss what was learned from the tutorial about the research process. Online course discussion material includes links to the program-specific LibGuide and reference source material used in the discussion. Participants respond to online discussion in an asynchronous manner over the lesson week with primary response due prior to peer response. Librarians provide students with substantive information throughout the lesson week with additional linked material and videos customized to student response and questions.

Through the active engagement of librarian, students are able to have an ongoing conversations over the week where students engage by commenting on librarian responses and resources provided and asking additional questions. So, the exercise is actually debriefed during the course discussion itself. Librarians intentionally respond on an informational and personal level thereby increasing the likelihood of student engagement and building rapport. Faculty also

respond to students adding another perspective to the course discussion. Extra credit is assigned to students for participation in the discussion. Subsequent student contact with librarians are provided by email. Since the embedded librarianship is highly customizable, it can be used a variety of ways to meet student information literacy and research needs, such as the preparation and identification of specific quality sources for a semester long research paper, creation of an orientation to library resources video supplemented with a quiz, and individual student consultation on conducting research (Lysiak et al., 2018).

Session Description

This 60-minute activity session presents an overview of embedded librarianship, its use in an online undergraduate leadership course, and for participants to explore how this program can be tailored to meet their course needs. The embedded librarianship was designed to provide online adult learners equitable access to librarian resources through the active participation of librarians in the course design and delivery of course content. The session explores the impetus for the creation of the embedded librarianship, the collaborative approach used in its design, ways of customizing activities to meet student needs and course goals, the use of technology tools and platform, the scalability of embedded librarianship content design, the results for student surveys and feedback. Participants get to review some of the embedded librarianship material and ask questions from both instructors and librarians engaged in the course discussion and implementation process. Participants have the opportunity to engage in an abbreviated version of the online course discussion activity. This session addresses how to use the embedded librarianship to meet student needs and course

goals. Faculty and librarians explore the programs successes, how to use student feedback to further customize learning activities, and areas for further improvement.

This session's redesign of practices traditionally used in residential classroom for online use aligns with the conference's theme of *Tradition Meets Technology: Finding Ways Forward*.

Session Overview and Topics	Time Allotted (60 Minutes)
What is an Embedded Librarian Program?	1 minute
The Program Benefits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High touch • High tech • Equitable access 	2 minutes
The History of the Embedded Librarian Program at Penn State	1 minute
Embedded Librarian Program: The Program Target <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional support for upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses • Current focus on needs students in foundational courses 	2 minutes
What Does the Embedded Librarian Do? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plays active role in the design and delivery of the course 	1 minutes
What Does It Look Like? Story of OLEAD 100 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team approach 	2 minutes
The Planning of the OLEAD 100 Embedded Librarian Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot Study—Fall 2019—Fall 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ One section—35 students • Scalable—Spring 2020 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Now available to 2-3 sections per semester—Fall, Spring, Summer ○ 2 librarians, 2-3 instructors 	2 minutes
Embedded Librarian Program Learning Objectives	1 minute
Possible Types of Activities—The Story of OLEAD 100 Embedded librarians supported online students in an asynchronous course by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Getting to know students in course introductions. • Developing an APA Quiz and a subject related Library Guide. 	2 minutes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging students in Librarian-led Course Discussion. • Providing assignment feedback. • Being available to students throughout the semester. 	
<p>Examples of Embedded Librarian Activities—OLEAD 100</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Librarian Course Discussion (asynchronous) 	2 minutes
<p>Exercise--Librarian-led Course Discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respond to one of three discussion prompts in the assumed role of the instructor (2-3 minutes). • Provide real-time instructor responses to a simulated learning management platform where student responses and librarian responses are populated. • Group discussion about exercise and the implications (5-7 minutes). 	15 minutes
OLEAD 100 Embedded Librarian Program—Examples of Librarian Supplemental Material	1 minutes
<p>What Were the Results of the OLEAD 100 Embedded Librarian Program?</p> <p>For Students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of program library guides. • Increased contact with librarians during and outside of course. • More ease of use of library resources and APA formatting. • Reported reduction in anxiety related to research and academic writing activities. • Increased student engagement and support in course discussion. • Better able to understand students' specific needs. 	2 minutes
<p>Embedded Librarian Program for OLEAD 100: What Did We Learn and Challenges Faced?</p> <p>Challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the role of the embedded librarian for students. • How to help adult learners who may be taking their first course after returning to academia to complete their degree. 	2 minutes

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How to identify and address student concerns. • How to engage students in utilizing the support of the embedded librarian. • Coordinating librarians and instructors in 3 sections of one course. <p>Learned</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High touch matters • Insight through engaging with students in an online course discussion allowed a more customized response and targeted learning. • Students encouraged and supported each other's learning. • Librarian information, student support, faculty feedback over the course, and student practice—all support student skill development over time. 	
<p>Embedded Librarian Program for OLEAD 100: Current and Future Revisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to structure embedded librarian activities with both a high tech and high touch approach • Use conversation to humanize Canvas and information literacy • Use assignments, such as course discussions to help to contextualize the tutorials and integrate them into the course. • Context, content, and customization... • Librarian role in providing additional information is pivotal for student engagement 	1 minute
<p>What Were the Results of the Embedded Librarian Program for Other Courses at Penn State?</p>	1 minute
<p>What can You Gain From an Embedded Librarian Program in Your Course?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates opportunities for new pedagogical partners in designing courses. • Additional resources for the students learning. • Improve student performance. • Enhance students' group work and understanding of quality sources. 	5-7 minutes
<p>References/Further Reading</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burke, J. J., & Tumbleson, B. E. (2016). LMS embedded librarianship and the educational role 	

<p>of librarians. Library Technology Reports, 52(2), 5–9.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lysiak, L., Mross, E., & Raish, V. (2018). Across the campuses and around the globe: Reaching online learners through high-level embedded librarianship. Journal of Library & Information Services in Distance Learning, 12(1-2), 13-34. https://doi.org/10.1080/1533290X.2018.1502717 • Moore, M. G., & Kearsley, G. (2011). Distance education: A systems view of online learning (2nd ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning. 	
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Conclusion

The results of the use of the embedded librarianship in an online undergraduate leadership course demonstrates that it can be used to support student learning regarding academic writing, basic research, and APA formatting as well as helping to reduce the reported anxiety of adult online students returning to academia to complete their education. This approach traditionally used for upper-level undergraduate or graduate students is now being used for students in a foundational leadership course. Its high-level embedded librarianship design allows high-touch librarian resources to be available to online students.

References

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