Catherine Tingelstad and Heather McCullough

Instruction librarians and instructional designers
A natural collaboration

At the University of North Carolina-Charlotte, instructional designers and research and instruction librarians have similar goals yet unique roles and distinct responsibilities. There are eight instructional designers at the Center for Teaching & Learning (CTL) who use learning theory and design knowledge to work with faculty to plan and create online courses. At the university’s Atkins Library, 16 instruction librarians, including subject liaisons and first-year writing specialists, connect with faculty and students to further understanding of information literacy and research resources. Recognizing the groups’ common goals of partnering with faculty in course development and creating high-quality online learning resources, group administrators have launched an initiative to introduce the designers and librarians to each other and to their work.

In the summer of 2018, the two groups met in the first of a series of opportunities to get to know each other and to better understand their professional roles. The goals of the collaboration were for the instructional designers and the instruction librarians to meet, to learn about each other’s work and approaches to instruction, and to consider opportunities for connection and collaboration. The meeting attendees were assigned a pre-reading, “Comparisons and Collaborations between the Professions,” a chapter in the book, Librarians and Instructional Designers: Collaboration and Innovation. After a series of introductions and an icebreaker, each group provided an overview of its roles. The instructional designers discussed their work with distance education development and instructional alignment, and the instruction librarians talked about information literacy, the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, and their instructional initiatives. The main activity for the session focused on an analysis of the instructional designers’ planning materials for a course in progress and input from the instruction librarians for library involvement in that planning process. After sharing ideas among all of the group members, the meeting attendees considered next steps for the collaboration.

In response to prompts, the meeting participants provided feedback. Table 1 contains a sample of the responses.

Throughout the fall semester, members of the two groups met for lunch on a monthly basis to continue getting to know one another, to further understand their work, and

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to develop ideas for collaborating on both small initiatives and large projects.

As planning progressed for meetings between the two groups, it became increasingly clear that while the goals of the two groups were similar—well-designed instruction with clear learning objectives and opportunities for assessment—the form of that instruction differed. Instruction librarians collaborate with faculty members to teach one or more research and information literacy sessions in their classes, while the instructional designers partner with faculty to plan course design and delivery for courses. Leslee Shell, Steven Crawford, and Patricia Harris concurred that, “library modules are different than the semester-long courses the instructional designers traditionally support.” This realization was instrumental in influencing the direction and design of the next group session.

The second meeting of the two groups occurred at the end of the Fall 2017 semester and focused on the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education.

The goals for the session were similar to those of the first meeting: 1) continue to learn about each other’s approach to instruction, 2) discuss the ACRL Framework and practice applying it, and 3) find opportunities for connection. The pre-readings for the meeting were the ACRL Framework along with several short articles discussing the frames conceptually and practically.

After a short overview of the library’s digital learning objects and its goals for integrating services and resources into the university’s learning management system, Canvas, the group focused on the ACRL Framework, reviewing each of the six frames. The participants divided into teams comprised of both librarians and instructional designers, and each group was tasked with building a library instruction lesson plan based on one or more of the frames. Six posters were created, each focusing on one of the frames, its description, and associated knowledge practices. The posters were placed around the work space so that they could be easily accessed by the participants. The activity proved to be both timely and educational for all of the participants, as higher education organizations are continuing to emphasize the importance of information literacy in course content in the academic disciplines. The groups shared their lesson plans and discussed potential next steps for this ongoing collaboration.

Once again, the meeting participants provided feedback in response to three prompts (see Table 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Post-meeting feedback for summer meeting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>One thing I learned</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Both of our groups value process and reflection</td>
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<tr>
<td>ID &amp; Librarians have similar goals but also have specific goals unique to each role</td>
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<tr>
<td>Librarian Framework similar to QM standards of Course Alignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course alignment is a “back and forth” process, not linear. Similar to the research process</td>
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<td>Similar focus on learning objectives driving teaching and course design.</td>
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As a result of the meetings between these two groups, several instruction librarians initiated collaborative efforts with instructional designers and technical managers from CTL to introduce library services into the university’s Canvas learning management system. Librarians were interested in developing a library presence in Canvas to meet and work with students at their point of need. Because CTL administers, develops, and provides training on Canvas, their buy-in and expertise were essential to making this happen. So, members of the two groups, having talked about library instruction during the group meetings, worked together to determine how to integrate library services and resources into the learning management system.

Working with the CTL technical team manager, instructional librarians were also able to develop a “librarian” role in Canvas with specific permissions so that faculty could add a librarian to their online courses. This customized role allows faculty to include librarians in courses without having to add them as an instructor with full rights to course permissions. The librarian instead has the ability to perform specific functions within Canvas. For example, the librarian can moderate a discussion among students in a class but does not have permission to edit grades. During the first year since the development of the librarian role, faculty have added instructional librarians to 124 courses in this capacity.

To further integrate the library resources into Canvas, instruction librarians and instructional designers have worked together to implement the LibGuides LTI (learning tools interoperability) in the learning management system. LTI allows Canvas users to access a customized LibGuide through a link in their courses. The expertise and support of the instructional designers and tech manager at CTL were integral to making this happen. The two groups are currently collaborating to promote faculty use of library videos and tutorials in their Canvas courses. In an effort to increase awareness and usage of these resources, instruction librarians have partnered with an instructional designer to outline and document the process for incorporating this content. The groups also highlighted this initiative in training and educational opportunities for faculty this fall.

Instructional designers have increasingly reached out to librarians to support or partner on initiatives and have expanded their use and referrals to the library’s Makerspace, Visualization Lab, and EZ Video Studio. In particular, they have worked with library colleagues to reserve and host activities and meetings in the Visualization Lab. They have
also begun referring faculty to use the EZ Video Studio in course development. Finally, they are reaching out more to instruction librarians as they work with faculty to design and develop online courses. In particular, they are now regularly consulting with librarians about locating and using high-quality OER and library-sourced content. One of CTL's high-priority projects, an adaptive learning program for general education math, has an OER dimension and the Engineering/STEM librarian has been a part of planning meetings for that program.

Anecdotally, the authors have observed that their team members are reaching out to each other in event planning and with general questions with more frequency than before the meetings. As this collaboration continues to develop, the instructional designers will elaborate on their process for online course design so that the librarians have a clearer understanding of their work. The partnership between the two groups will continue both formally and informally to meet the goals established at the onset of the project—networking, an understanding and appreciation of each group’s work, and opportunities for connection and collaboration. The fact that there are numerous methods for achieving these goals guarantees a long and lasting association.

Notes

(“Drops of Diversity,” cont. from page 610)

“Big Read” across the Hampton Roads region. The book selected by the NEA Big Read: Hampton Roads was Citizen: An American Lyric by Claudia Rankine, which focuses on issues around race. Hofheimer Library seized this opportunity to partner with faculty again, and the library director moderated a panel of faculty from a variety of disciplines who reflected on the book. Thanks to panelists offering their students extra credit or incorporating the book into their course, this was another well-attended event. In addition, the library’s Faculty-Staff Book Club also chose to read the book and attend the author event hosted by another university in the area.

Future directions
Although the Hofheimer Library Diversity Team is currently only using the newsletter internally, the director is considering the possibility of sharing the “Drops of Diversity” site more broadly. VWU’s Center for the Study of Religious Freedom has expressed interest in having access to the site and possibly authoring content. What’s more, the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities (VCIC) has opened a location on the Virginia Wesleyan campus, and the library is interested in exploring how they may learn and partner with this organization. As part of the campus partnership, VCIC will provide training sessions for VWU each year. The library and the Center for the Study of Religious Freedom will partner this summer on engaging VCIC to offer training sessions for VWU faculty, staff, and students on topics that are of greatest interest.

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