Improving Teaching and Learning through Instructional Partnerships:
Building Librarian Relationships with One-on-one, In-depth Conversations

Rebecca Payne, Sheila Stoeckel
UW-Madison Libraries

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Overview

- UW-Madison and Library Instruction Program
- Instructional Partnerships Program
- How the Program works
- Tools
- What we learned: benefits and challenges
- How this could work in your library
# UW-Madison Academic Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Number of Programs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate Majors</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master’s Degree Programs</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctoral Programs</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses Offered</td>
<td>4,378</td>
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</table>
# UW-Madison Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Type</th>
<th>Number of Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>28,999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>8,860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>2,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special</td>
<td>1,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (Fall 2007)</strong></td>
<td><strong>42,401</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Library and Information Literacy Instruction @ UW-Madison

- 21 participating libraries
- Teach 2,300+ sessions to 31,500+ users.
- 125 affiliated staff members
- Classes for diverse audiences
Instruction-Related Professional Development

• Library & Information Literacy Instruction (LILI) programs:
  – Monthly forum
  – Annual retreat
  – Annual banquet

• Campus teaching and learning events
Questions

• What kinds of professional development programs related to teaching do you participate in?
• How do you work on improving your teaching?
Why Another LILI Professional Development Program?

• Need to continually improve teaching
• Need for one-on-one discussions about specifics of teaching
• Need to improve teaching to improve learning with emphasis on assessment
• No formal evaluation of librarians’ teaching
Program Goals

- Improve teaching and student learning.
- Encourage one-on-one, in-depth discussions.
- Facilitate reflection about teaching and development of teaching skills.
- Provide opportunities to receive and give feedback and learn from one another.
- Build supportive relationships and strengthen community.
Comments from Jon and Kelli about their partnership.
Program Development

• Spring-Summer 2007:
  – Review of literature and similar programs
  – Creation of Program structure and tool kit
• Fall 2007:
  – Pilot Program with working group members
• December 2007:
  – Registration by campus librarians
  – Orientation workshop
• Spring 2008:
  – Launch of the Program
Program Characteristics

- Voluntary
- Flexible and self-directed
- Focus on development, not evaluation
- Reflective self-assessment
- Relationship of equals, not mentoring
- Mutually supportive, non-threatening
Program Structure

• Pairing of librarians based on similar goals, interests, and schedules.
• Option to choose partner.
• Partners participate in self-directed activities of:
  – Reflection
  – Discussion
  – Observation
Partner Roles

• Partners trade off in two roles:
  – Instructor:
    • Librarian whose goals are the focus of reflection, discussion, observation.
  – Facilitator:
    • Librarian who facilitates instructor’s reflection and observes and gives feedback on the instructor’s teaching.
Reflection

• Reflection with partners and on own.
• Partners ask questions to facilitate reflection of their partners.
• Questions for thinking about strengths and areas of improvement, goals, class planning, debriefing a class, etc.
Discussion

- Partners discuss goals, classes, aspects of classes, etc.
- Face-to-face, phone, or e-mail.
- Before and after class with or without observation.
Observation

• Partners observe and provide feedback on partners’ teaching and classes.
• Feedback based on recorded observable behavior related to partners’ goals.
• Example observation methods:
  – Scripting
  – Verbatim log
  – Checklist for behaviors
Selecting Instructional Goals

• **By yourself**, think about instructional goals or focus areas you might want to work on.

• Refer to “Activity Worksheet” and “Instructional Focus Areas” handouts.
Selecting Instructional Goals

• **With your neighbor**, talk about instructional goals/focus areas you might want to work on.

• Refer to “Activity Worksheet” and “Instructional Focus Areas” handouts.
Partner Conversations

- Discuss with your neighbor:
  - What’s wrong with this conversation?
  - How might the conversation be improved?
Best Practices

• Schedule partner conversations soon after instruction.
• Start with instructor’s reflection before giving feedback.
• Focus feedback on partner’s goals or focus areas.
• Base feedback on observable behavior. Be descriptive, not evaluative.

Brinko 1993
# Program Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Early December</td>
<td>Registration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-December</td>
<td>Orientation Workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Initial Planning Meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January-March</td>
<td>Partner Activities/Instruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Partner Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>Wrap-up Lunch</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Program Participants

• 19 participants representing 5 campus libraries:
  – Engineering
  – Health Sciences
  – Humanities & Social Sciences
  – Life Sciences
  – Undergraduate (College Library)
  – Instruction Program

• Partnered with librarians in different libraries.
Sample Instructional Goals

- Presentation skills
- Pacing and transitions
- Student engagement and active learning
- Classroom assessment techniques
- Use of clickers and technologies
- Connecting with students
### Sample Activities

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time (hours)</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12.18.2007</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>01.24.2008</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>initial meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.12.2008</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>observation of partner class &amp; discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.27.2008</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>discussion of my class observed by partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>communication, reflection, report writing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>05.29.2008</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>wrap-up lunch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 hours total</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
Program Benefits

- Fun!
- Time for reflection on and discussion of teaching
- Specific feedback on teaching
- Support in working on teaching skills
- Exchange of ideas and techniques
- Getting to know colleagues
- Learning about instruction in campus libraries
Comment from Participant

“Just the act of discussing my teaching style with another librarian was helpful. It solidified where I know why I do what I do as well as pointed to places in my teaching of which I am not conscious.”
Comment from Participant

“This format forces you to make your evaluations in a quantifiable manner, which could actually lead to change. By focusing on specifics a little at a time, this program can make us better at what we do.”
Program Challenges

• Coordinating schedules
• Unexpected circumstances:
  – snow storms
  – no attendees at workshop
  – lighter class load
Tools

• Web Site:
  – http://tinyurl.com/457jzb

• Tools
  – Activity Worksheet
  – Observation Worksheet, etc.
Discussion & Questions

• How could instructional partnerships work in your library, on your campus, etc.?
• Other questions
Resources

Contacts

Rebecca Payne
rpayne@library.wisc.edu

Sheila Stoeckel
sstoeckel@library.wisc.edu