Pathways potluck: They bring the questions, we bring the research!

By: Beth Filar Williams and Jenny Dale

This work originally published by ACRL as:

Filar Williams, B. & Dale, J. (2014). Pathways potluck: They bring the questions, we bring the research! In Cass Kvenild & Kaijsa Calkins (Eds.), Embedded librarian's cookbook. Association of College and Research Libraries.

***Reprinted with permission. No further reproduction is authorized without written permission from ACRL. This version of the document is not the version of record. ***

Abstract:

Our goal is to assist students in finding appropriate scholarly sources for their final research papers in an entry level (Pathways) course for the BA in Liberal Studies. We have been invited to work with this class to help students in the online Humanities program develop and hone their information literacy skills and become more familiar with library services and resources for distance students.

Keywords: embedded librarian | research | higher education

Book chapter:

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Our goal is to assist students in finding appropriate scholarly sources for their final research papers in an entry level (Pathways) course for the BA in Liberal Studies. We have been invited to work with this class to help students in the online Humanities program develop and hone their information literacy skills and become more familiar with library services and resources for distance students.

SERVES

20-25 students in an online course.

COOKING TIME

Prep time: At start of each semester update the LibGuide and touching base with the professor.

INGREDIENTS AND EQUIPMENT

Your brain and a computer with an Internet connection!
PREPARATION

- Identify the entry level course for an online program with a research need.
- Meet with the professor to discuss the syllabus, goals, assignments, etc.
- Explain how librarians can help with research assignments.
- Get the professor to add the librarian(s) as course builders or TAs in the course shell in the learning management system and have professor encourage students to consult with librarians at the time of research paper assignment.
- Set up a LibGuide for the class to use that includes relevant library resources and databases as well as information about services for distance learners.
- Record a video greeting to students to help them personally connect with the librarian ("we are real people!"). Embed video in LibGuide and in Blackboard course.

COOKING METHOD

During course, push announcements to students at key times when assignments are due and periodically check on discussion boards or set up notifications. During research paper assignment, students will email librarian(s) once their professor has approved their research topic.

Figure 1. Embedded librarian email to student
Create a template email response that can be tweaked for each student since most will start with the same handful of databases and copy each other on the email if more than one librarian is embedded. (See Figure 1.) Let the professor know which students have consulted with the librarians. At end of semester, reflect with professor and possibly review papers for assessment.

ALLERGY WARNINGS

It is critical to collaborate with faculty to ensure that there is a relevant and appropriate research project. This idea is best for the entry class for an online only degree program, otherwise it is not scalable to all courses due to the time involved. Consultations can take 15-30 minutes for each student, and sometimes more if they come back with more questions.

CHEFS' NOTE

At the end of each semester, it is important to reflect on how the embedded project worked. Each class is different, and some semesters are more successful than others. Active reflection and
periodic check-ins with the course instructor help ensure a successful embedded relationship between the librarian and the students in the course.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Course LibGuide available at http://uncg.libguides.com/bls301