OSU Libraries Framework for Teaching Excellence

Preface

The OSU Libraries' (OSUL) Framework for Teaching Excellence is built upon the OSU Libraries Teaching Philosophy (http://osulibrary.oregonstate.edu/library_instruction/teaching_philosophy) which commits us to a learner-centered approach to teaching. To support this approach, we must recognize that OSUL library instructors work in a dynamic and quickly-changing landscape. Changes in information and communication technologies have led to dramatic shifts in the way people find, use, evaluate and even understand the impact of information. To help today's students develop the skills they need to be lifelong learners in this changing environment and to develop meaningful, authentic learning experiences for those students are challenges that every library instructor encounters. To meet these challenges, OSUL's library instructors continuously strive to update and improve their skills.

To help ensure that every library instructor engaged in teaching has the context they need to develop their skills, and to ensure that they can do so in a supportive, collaborative environment, the OSUL Teaching and Engagement Department (TED) has articulated a set of standards for OSUL library instructors. These standards, adapted from the *Association of College and Research Libraries Standards for Proficiencies for Instruction Librarians and Coordinators* [1] provide a framework for goal setting and professional development activities that move all OSUL library instructors toward individual and collective teaching excellence. The document focuses on those standards and proficiencies particularly valued by OSUL library instructors; these include Communication & Outreach, Instructional Design & Assessment, Teaching, Presentation and Leadership.

These standards are not intended to be comprehensive, and they should not be used as a checklist. These standards are presented as aspirational goals; they should serve as a framework for identifying opportunities for and guiding continual improvement. Additionally for tenure-track librarians with instruction assignments, this document provides a structure by which individuals can frame and describe library instruction and efforts to improve instruction proficiency as required by the promotion and tenure process.

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[1] Association of College and Research Libraries Standards for Proficiencies for Instruction Librarians and Coordinators. Retrieved July 28, 2010 from http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/profstandards.cfm

Communication & Outreach

Library instructors must be able to communicate effectively with a wide variety of people including students, faculty partners, campus partners and our colleagues in the library. At OSUL, library instructors create safe, respectful environments that encourage active and interactive communication where both (or all) parties learn through a process of dynamic give-and-take. OSUL library instructors reflect on their own assumptions, and keep an open mind when communicating with students, faculty, and colleagues.

OSU library instructors strive to:

- Communicate with TED to ensure that their individual instruction goals align with the OSUL's Instruction Program goals.
- Communicate the OSUL Instruction Program goals, as appropriate, to both established and potential partners whenever and wherever they are found throughout OSU's colleges, departments and programs.
- Communicate with faculty about developing meaningful research experiences for students, designing good assignments and collaboratively planning instruction sessions that will improve student success in their classes.
- Assess the expectations, preconceptions, learning and personality styles, and skill levels of their audience in order to persuasively and effectively communicate with varied audiences and partners.
- Reflect on the assumptions underlying their practice, in order to approach new ideas with an open mind.

Instructional Design & Assessment

Library instructors need to design instruction and measure the impact of the instruction they do whether it is classroom-based, computer-mediated, or web-based. We recognize that not all library instructors have formal training in instructional design and educational assessment. However, we also recognize that an effective, responsive, strategic instruction program requires that every library instructor develop their own skills in this area. Library faculty with liaison responsibilities also need to be familiar with the curriculum and research practices in their assigned subject area in order to effectively design instruction and assessment for their students. Across the range of instruction and liaison responsibilities, we work together to identify important shared learning goals.

OSU library instructors strive to:

- Work with subject faculty/ instructors, as appropriate, to develop shared outcomes for the instruction session or instruction materials that take into account the common characteristics for the body of students (i.e. academic status, research/library experience, motivation, instruction environment).
- Determine time allowed, class or group size, the assignment requirements and assess the need for hands-on learning experiences in order to identify the appropriate number of learning outcomes to focus on in a session or online learning module.
- Advocate for students and their learning needs when faculty partners ask for too much information, or inappropriate information, to be included in an instruction session or online learning module.
- Consider assessment (both formative and summative) opportunities when developing learning outcomes.
- Document assessment efforts in order to support the overall evaluation of the OSUL Instruction Program.
- Provide data, as needed, to assist TED in describing the OSUL Instruction Program and demonstrating its impact.
- Actively participate in professional development activities around assessment (inside the library and out), sharing expertise and ideas with colleagues, and presenting on topics of shared interest.

Teaching

When it comes to formal training in teaching and pedagogy, library instructors' experiences vary widely. OSUL library instructors work together to develop a core set of teaching skills for use in the classroom and on the web. We recognize that these skills are an essential component of an effective instruction program and we focus our efforts in two areas. First, we work to develop teaching skills that support a learner-centered environment for our students. Secondly, we reflect on our current practice, examining the outcomes of and feedback about our instruction. We do this as individuals, and as a group, sharing our experiences and results in order to gain insights about our own practices and to support each other in our efforts to improve as teachers.

OSU library instructors strive to:

- Present information in a variety of formats to meet multiple learning styles and recognize and address the limitations of different instruction spaces, including web-based or computer-mediated instruction.
- Integrate opportunities for learners to engage in active discussion around the skills and concepts being taught.
- Exhibit facility with and integrate technology in a way that enhances learning.
- Analyze qualitative and/or quantitative data gathered before, during and after instruction, and use that data to revise lesson plans, learning materials and other teaching strategies as needed.
- Actively participate in professional development activities (inside and outside the library) sharing expertise and ideas with colleagues, and presenting on topics of shared interest.
- Attend conferences and workshops about teaching in their subject areas, when those opportunities present themselves, and apply what they learn to providing information literacy instruction in their subject areas.

Presentation

To effectively teach information literacy concepts and research skills, library instructors must overcome a unique set of challenges. Excellent presentation skills help them do so. The Oregon State University community is big and diverse, and every member of that community brings a different set of experiences with research to the table. OSUL library instructors strive to meet the learning needs of the whole OSU community and must frequently do so in a single class session or through a set of online tutorials. We build relationships over time with our partners among the teaching faculty, but most of our interactions with students take place online, in stand-alone workshops, in one-shot guest lectures, or in one-on-one interactions. In this context, without the opportunity to really get to know students over time, effective presentation skills are crucial.

OSU library instructors strive to:

- Use a variety of media and a variety of techniques to present instructional materials in diverse ways to engage the widest array of learning styles and to accommodate individual student needs.
- Use classroom instructional technologies effectively and make smooth transitions between technological tools.
- Assess the needs of a class or group of students, and develop lesson plans that clarify confusing terminology, avoid excessive jargon, and use vocabulary appropriate for each level of student.
- Analyze their own presentation skills, take the time to practice, and use a variety of strategies to gather feedback from others.
- Refine lesson plans, update online instructional modules, and revise content as necessary in order to achieve familiarity and confidence with planned presentations.
- Use communication and presentation technologies well, and keep abreast of new developments in these fields.

<u>Leadership</u>

Library faculty with teaching assignments have leadership roles that go beyond their individual relationships with discipline faculty. Library instructors must be able to connect information literacy to larger campus goals, such as student success and engagement. Developing and maintaining positive and productive relationships with campus partners at many levels is a key part of making those connections meaningful outside the library; it is also key to developing support for library instruction program goals. By participating in campus governance, library instructors can advocate for curricular and strategic goals that include information literacy skills. Conversations between library instructors and subject faculty illuminate how our goals for student learning intersect. Within the library, library instructors advocate for information technology, collections, and library spaces that support students' development of information literacy skills.

OSU library instructors strive to:

- Identify opportunities to promote the libraries' instructional goals and have the skills to take advantage of those opportunities.
- Seek out and identify opportunities to communicate the significance and value of information literacy instruction to students and faculty.
- Advocate for information literacy on campus by communicating its value to administrative units and by participating in faculty governance.
- Use their subject expertise to articulate the importance of information literacy within particular disciplines.
- Take the initiative, within the library, to point out opportunities for library resources, technologies, services and space improvements in order to student learning.
- Identify strategic opportunities to integrate information literacy instruction into the curricula in their assigned liaison areas.
- When possible, participate in the curriculum development at the, college or university level.
- Be active in the profession, sharing what we do with other teaching professionals around the region, the country and the world.

Using the Framework for Teaching Excellence document:

For LIBRARY FACULTY:

Recognize that the proficiencies articulated in this document are aspirational. While they are not comprehensive, they do reflect skills that OSU library instructors have collaboratively defined as important, and should be continuously developed and improved.

Use the document to:
• Articulate instruction-related goals during the annual planning process.
• Identify areas where development is needed.
• Ask TED for additional support in areas that need it.
• Provide a focus for feedback requested from peer-reviewers and other observers.

For SUPERVISORS:

Recognize that this document is not intended to be used to describe an instructor's success or failure in instruction, but to structure an ongoing process of professional development.

Together, with library instructors, use this document to:
• Discuss individual strengths and weaknesses in these areas of proficiency.
• Identify 1-2 to focus on as part of the annual goal-setting process.
• Create a plan for developing skills in the focus area.
• Document a library instructor's process of developing teaching skills over time.
• Identify, collaboratively, areas of collective strength and to identify skill gaps in the OSU Libraries Instruction Program

For TENURE:

Use the document to:
• Communicate the broad picture of what library instruction is and what library instructors do.
• Articulate what excellence means in our unique instructional context.
• Demonstrate an individual librarian's development and improvement as a teacher over time.