Partnering for Academic Student Success (PASS)
Annual Report 2011-2012
A partnership between the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation (CTSI)
and Instructional Librarians at the University of Toronto

Building on the goals outlined in the PASS Report 2010-2011, librarians seconded to CTSI continued to deepen their engagement with teaching and learning by expanding University partnerships, increasing immersion in and development of CTSI initiatives, and developing a multi-faceted program of professional development for librarians who support teaching and learning at the University.

This year's secondments of four instructional librarians from all three University of Toronto campuses permitted us to explore models of learning, teaching and leading, outside the confines of our home libraries and departments. As information professionals, we shared our knowledge and skills with CTSI colleagues, and developed a new appreciation for the great variety of expertise evident and being developed by the staff of CTSI.

As a new feature of the secondment arrangement this year, two of the librarians came to their secondment with individual projects they had identified. There were numerous opportunities to collaborate and partner on CTSI-led initiatives – so many, in fact, that we weren't able to progress as far along as we had hoped on those individual projects. From this experience, we learned the value in letting the opportunities reach out to us, rather than coming into the secondment with firm expectations and specific projects. This lesson will inform future plans for 2012-2013 and beyond.

As we reflect on this year, we appreciated the warmth, creativity, and professionalism shared by all members of CTSI. We learned a lot, and we intend to continue sharing our knowledge with colleagues. Thank you for this opportunity.

Patricia Bellamy, St. George
Whitney Kemble, UTSC
Joanna Szurmak, UTM
Rita Vine, St. George

Librarians seconded one day a week from August 1, 2011 to July 30, 2012: Patricia Bellamy (St. George; continuing from 2010-11), Whitney Kemble (UTSC), Joanna Szurmak (UTM), and Rita Vine (St. George)

GOAL 1: Build partnerships amongst CTSI staff and instructional librarians. Develop a relationship with CTSI through our participation in weekly staff meetings and other CTSI events.

Accomplishments:

1. Regular participation in **CTSI weekly staff meetings; bi-weekly meetings** with Carol Rolheiser, Director; **monthly updates to CTSI staff**; and ongoing **planning meetings** with other CTSI staff members.
2. Participation in **Teaching and Learning Symposium** November 28 2011: *Cultivating Teaching, Cultivating Learning*.
   a. *Beyond crime and punishment: reframing the problem of student plagiarism*. Brock MacDonald, Andrea Williams, & Rita Vine. (Roundtable)
   b. *Leveraging library resources to create information-rich learning experiences*. Rita Vine, Moderator. (Roundtable. Showcase examples in Medicine and Political Science)
   c. Coordinated and staffed library resource and information table
3. Participation in **New Faculty Orientation** (Back-to-school week), August 22, 2011
4. *Demystifying Library Research*. November 2, 2011 and February 9, 2012. Monique Flaccavento & Rita Vine (TATP Workshop).
5. Completion of final report: *Partnering for Academic Student Success (PASS): A Partnership Between the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation (CTSI) and Instructional Librarians, University of Toronto, July 29, 2011.* Patricia Bellamy, Sheril Hook, and Sarah Fedko.
6. Participation in the **CTSI Planning Retreat** on April 18, 2012. All PASS librarians contributed to CTSI analysis and planning.
7. Content contribution to the **CTSI Activity Report**, May 2012. Patricia Bellamy, with input from Joanna Szurmak and Rita Vine, drafted highlights of PASS activity.

GOAL 2: Collaboration regarding existing CTSI programmatic initiatives to focus on instructional practices that create optimal learning experiences.

Accomplishments:

1. **Course Evaluation Framework:** Collaboration with CTSI to create a library-related assessment question in the Course Evaluation Framework question bank, reword and group information-literacy-related questions in the bank.

2. **Course Design/Re-design Institute (CDI), May 16-17, 2012**
   Patricia Bellamy and Joanna Szurmak worked collaboratively with
   CDI creators on the CDI planning committee, January-May 2012.
   Regular meetings brought together collective ideas and expertise and
   resulted in the newest model of the CDI.
   a) Faculty resource: *Library Support for Your Course and Your
      Students*
      http://guides.library.utoronto.ca/supportforinstructors
      Revised by Sarah Fedko and Patricia Bellamy. This guide
      supports instructors' assignment design. Joanna and Patricia
      presented the guide's content on Day 1 of the CDI.
   b) Developed new online cohort materials, including instructional
      materials, worksheets and reading lists (Joanna Szurmak, with
      Laurie Harrison). Joanna Szurmak created visual charts to
      communicate the results of the CDI pre-assessment survey to
      participants.
   c) Debriefing of the CDI with the design team and development
      of next steps for the tri-campus development of this sustainable
      model.

**GOAL 3: Identify and develop new initiatives to support instructor
development and increase learning opportunities for students in
classrooms.**

Accomplishments:
1. Collaborated with writing instructors to present a new instructor
   seminar: *Clear as Mud: The Challenge of Teaching Effective Scholarly
   Writing and Honest Academic Work*, Rita Vine & Andrea Williams, Jan.
   26, 2012.
   a) Faculty and student resource: Citing Sources & Avoiding
      Plagiarism http://guides.library.utoronto.ca/citing. Rita
      Vine
2. Application of **Learning Outcomes Assessment Matrix (LOAM)**—a
   collaborative faculty/librarian project on scaffolding of learning
   outcomes, developed by Joanna Szurmak and Andrew Petersen of
   UTM—in support of CTSI's Course Design/Redesign Institute.
   LOAM was introduced to CTSI and assessed as a potential in-depth
   course design tool in support of CTSI Course Design/Redesign
   Institute. After a detailed analysis of the LOAM process, and its first
   application in the Quality Improvement and Patient Safety M. Sc.
   Program from the Institute for Health Policy Management and
   Evaluation (a team that would be attending the Course
   Design/Redesign Institute), LOAM was designated a course design
   support process but was not offered as part of the CTSI Course
   Design/Redesign Institute.

GOAL 4: Identify best practices and challenges that influence collaboration between instructional liaison librarians and instructors.

Accomplishments:
1. Created **five videos** of faculty discussing their goals in collaborating with librarians (Patricia Bellamy, with technical assistance from Kathleen Olmstead and Tyler Blacquiere, CTSI staff member and CTSI work study student):
   - Prof. Anne Urbancic length: 2.11
   - Prof. Lori Loeb length: 2.41
   - Prof. Michael Stein (2 videos) length: 3:09
   - Prof. Stein length: 2:11
   - Dr. Amir Azarpazhooh (in progress)

GOAL 5: Develop instructional excellence and transfer of teaching expertise among librarians throughout the University community.

Accomplishments:
1. Six librarians participated in the CTSI eight week course (2 hours/week), *Fundamentals of University Teaching*, Jan. 25 to Mar. 21 (Patricia Bellamy). Both faculty and librarians were students in this course.
2. Documented librarians' experiences in the course through weekly surveys and two focus groups. Results were used to determine whether Fundamentals course is appropriate for building librarian teaching capacity. (Patricia Bellamy, in collaboration with CTSI faculty liaisons, Martha Harris and Ben Pottruff).
3. Identified the next steps to carry forward the results of the surveys and focus groups. A report and set of recommendations developed (see Appendix #1).
4. [Ongoing] Development of a best practices guide on curriculum mapping (Whitney Kemble). Presentation accepted for the Ontario Library Association's Conference, February 2013, *Curriculum Mapping: Putting Information Literacy on the Map.*
5. Creation of a literature search and shared bibliography on faculty/librarian collaboration http://bit.ly/tHNkuS
6. Implemented new instruction-focused blog (http://instruction.library.utoronto.ca) for current awareness of information literacy research and opportunities and Twitter account to communicate news (@uoftinfolit) (R.Vine)

Appendix #1
Summary of Librarian Focus Group
Fundamentals of University Teaching
April 4, 2012

Summary:

- All parts of the Course were effective; Librarian participants enjoyed the conversation and shared learning and benefited from interaction with both faculty and other Librarians
- Two major pieces were missing from the librarians' experience: a microteaching session, and a design section appropriate to lesson planning or curriculum planning rather than course design
- Assessment module could be re-worked to accommodate Librarians. This is something that is largely missing in Librarians' current practice. All Librarians recognized the role of a pre-needs assessment in designing lessons, but a takeaway assessment is often elusive
- Microteaching is a strong interest for Librarians; they do not often have opportunities to have their teaching evaluated and teach in a very different context from faculty. They would also find it useful to observe faculty teach in a Microteaching setting.
- There is interest in establishing a community of practice with other Librarians and Faculty who have completed the Course, possibly around teaching observations; after the Course ends, the group had excitement about renewed direction for their teaching and missed the opportunity to discuss what they had learned. There is a small concern here that initial enthusiasm will wane as more time passes and people will slip back into their previous practices.
- By far, Learning Styles was the most useful section, but it is often difficult to accommodate into the teaching structure
- Situational factors are often prohibitive about what can be accomplished in a Library teaching session, and so there is often little opportunity or time to apply best practices learned in the course
- Although Teaching Portfolios are not mandatory for Librarians, all felt this section of the course was valuable as a guide on how to reflect on their practice and set goals
- For new Librarians, soft skills such as being able to think on your feet and adapting to unexpected changes were emphasized. Instructional Design can be a guide, but for many the best experience comes from delivering a high number of sessions for a wide variety of audiences. Another soft skill that was emphasized was for the new Librarians to develop their teaching personalities; this will project more confidence in the classroom. Another resource may be to watch other instructional librarians to ascertain how their teaching personality may differ, but be able to learn from several different models.

Recommendations:

1. Revise course structure around three topics (course design, teaching dossiers, and assessment) to involve facilitating part of the class separately for Librarian-specific context to accommodate for the different needs of Faculty and Librarians. These sessions could be facilitated by members of the previous year's Librarian cohort.
2. Integrate microteaching into the course for all participants.
3. Integrate a senior Librarian into the course teaching team for 3 split topics.
4. Extend CTSI in-class observations to Librarians teaching.
5. Provide Librarians for opportunities for collaborative reflection on teaching experiences for purposes of documenting for annual performance appraisals.
6. Establish opportunities for continued development and discussion after the course, in the form of:
   a. Peer teaching observations of other peers' workshops/lectures (with training on observation skills, as required)
   b. Establishing a community of practice/discussion group to share best practices for teaching
   c. Pairing of peers to create "buddy system" or formal or informal mentorship through the teaching year

Discussion Points

Based on the librarians' participation in the Fundamentals of University Teaching, we would like to explore the following questions:

1. Librarians teach in different contexts and to a wide variety of audiences. Identify these different situational factors.
   - How do learning styles affect different contexts?

     1. Size of class
     2. Location, space, lab, classroom, lecture hall, library classroom, access to computers ("What happens if you have no Internet access?" "Oh, you're screwed.")
     3. Topic of Study or subject or discipline, i.e. Law and torts (esp if you're from a different background)
     4. Time to deliver session, e.g. one hour, ½ hour, 10 minutes
     5. Time of day or in the term
     6. Level of audience (e.g. grad, undergrad, 1st year vs 3rd year)
     7. Tied to a course or co-curricular (i.e. orientation sessions, Ref works)
     8. Tied to an assignment, (buy-in for the student, built-in reward structure for attending session)
     9. Required or supplemental/general interest (e.g. booked by student societies, optional in-class, general skills like Excel or resume creation)
     10. Drop-in or scheduled

11. Faculty expectations (also, is the instructor in the room, are they engaged, what did the instructors ask for?) Is there a higher level of conversation with the course instructor about session objectives? How can this be achieved?
12. Anxiety level (factor of experience)
13. Classroom technology – internet access, can the audience see the screen
14. Learning styles

- How did situational factors limit or encourage interactive activities? For example, the snowball activity: everyone was excited about this. What happened, why was it appealing? How would you use it in a one-off?

  Most important situational factors in limiting/encouraging interactive activities are size, subject, time, curricular/co-curricular
  Previous knowledge is more important.
  Learning styles = self-awareness that librarians do not need to limit teaching to how they learn.
  Size and content specific is important to interactive activities, this gets at student buy in, as does an explanation of the activity to make it make sense to the participants
  Student interest can be very limiting

- Do you think the topics on assessment relate to your teaching contexts? Would you assess for prior knowledge? Would you assess learning outcomes?

  What is the clearest point/muddiest point about what you learned?
  What is an outstanding question, this can be addressed in the research guide?
  Prior knowledge is important with a background probe.
  This can all be done simply throughout the session.
  Formative assessments are essential for tailoring the session to the audience, but formative assessment of the learning objectives do not happen after the session. Further investigation of how a Library session impacts student success on an assignment or leads to an improvement in the students overall GPA would provide interesting information. Tracking of these factors could lead to a better understanding of a librarians teaching effectiveness and also lead to more nuanced arguments about the importance of library teaching to upper administration.
  If a goal is to teach critical thinking, how do work within these constraints move beyond finding resources to teach students how to critically assess the sources they find.

2. For you personally, what are the greatest barriers for you in developing your teaching and learning skills?
   - Any barriers to the one-off teaching context?

- Lack of freedom in designing workshops ("you have the freedom but it's in a much shorter time frame. You have to be strict with yourself in determining what you're trying to teach. Sometimes you have to tell the prof no, we can't do that. But I can do this.")
- Students not graded on the assignment or attending
- Students think you're there to be their assistant

3. What topics covered in the Fundamentals of University Teaching would be of benefit to librarians who wish to improve their teaching? Note: I have created a list of topics covered at the end of each session (attached).

- Learning Outcomes (x2): "it helped me understand the course better"
- Feedback & Assessment: "if there's no method then there's no way of judging if it's effective" … "we don't talk about teaching in the MLIS program"
- Instructional Methods (x2): "You can be more creative with the framework. Most of us think lecturing is the only way."
- Learning Styles (x2): "Thinking about being ourselves, it's well-placed at the beginning of the course to push out of comfort zones." Most librarians teach to their own learning styles, it may be more beneficial to get to know their own learning styles better in order to understand how this impacts their teaching.
- "in an ideal world anyone would have access to all of these topics.
- Teaching Portfolio:
  - o "Important for the reflective pieces, if not reflective you just do what everyone else has done"
  - o If you know what you're working toward you can design yourself to meet the criteria
  - o Not all librarians have as much teaching so it's hard to make the portfolio mandatory
    - Would need a lot of support if it was going to be mandatory
    - Difficult to portray the experience of the job
  - o But reflection is important, and the key piece of portfolios
    - Reflection for promotion is not the same as reflection for improvement
  - o It's good guidance for goal-setting
- Course Design topic could be made more nuanced to fit the Workshop Design

- What topics did you find most applicable to your context? How could these topics be modified to fit your context?

- Teaching in the style we learn (for one person, a mini-epiphany)
- It's better to teach a few things well rather than fill time with too much information
- Teachers come in many shapes and sizes, it's about understanding your strengths
- PBL, want to try it out
- Constructivism: uncovering the ideas people come in with ("but once you figure it out, what are you supposed to do?")

- Use of a narrative (pillars), needing an underlying story
- The framework matters, not how long you're teaching for

4. How important was the faculty presence to your learning experience? Would you prefer to: learn with faculty, learn only with librarians, or use another model? (For example, breakout sessions for librarians at particular points in the course?)

   - Cross pollination was really helpful
   - Made connections to other faculty members
   - Informal pathways get opened
   - Never enough interaction
   - Increases awareness on both sides

5. What three things did you learn from faculty? **(One-minute paper)**

6. Given the different factors you have identified, what skills are necessary for librarians to be successful teachers?

   - Core Skills & competencies
   - Level of expertise and authenticity
   - Developing your own persona in the classroom
   - Less is more!
   - Communication Skills
   - Observation Skills and perception
   - Adaptability and knowing different angles and ways to say things
   - Thinking on your feet
   - Figuring out what works for you

7. What did you not get to talk about in the Fundamentals of University Teaching course that you would have found useful? (What topics, aspects, teaching scenarios relevant to librarians were not discussed?)

   - Nothing really missing
   - Suggestions for further reading
   - Seeing people actually teach
   - Talking about workshop design and how to improve it
   - Microteaching

8. In addition to formal training from this program, what other kinds of learning or support would you find helpful in building your skills in teaching and learning? Would librarians new to U of T have additional needs?
   - What would a librarian teaching a "one-off" need to do?
   - Would it be helpful to view a "one-off" session from another teacher? (Do you think it would benefit faculty members to see a "one-off" session)

- Instructional methods with examples of things you could do in a one-off
- It's different when you're thinking about something real
- Peer learning

Background--Librarians' Survey

After each session, librarians in the Fundamentals course were sent the following survey questions. Most replied on a weekly basis:
   a. What was meaningful to you today and why?
   b. What is one thing from today's session that you didn't understand or would like to think further about?
   c. If you could change anything what would it be?
   d. What did you learn from your faculty colleagues today?
   e. Any other comments about today's session?

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