Book review


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Christina Flood, Digital Literacy Librarian, University of Saint Joseph. Email: cflood@usj.edu

Engaging Students through Campus Libraries provides real life case studies of college courses and programmes led by librarians and courses in which a librarian was embedded. This publication is ideal for the academic librarian looking for cutting edge and reliable ways for librarians and libraries to develop new programmes and engage students. The book discusses nine examples of high-impact learning models from a variety of small and large higher educational institutions. Each model provides the reader with the methods of implementation, and research to back up why the institution chose their model and methods. The authors also provide an assessment and examples of how this was implemented to determine success. The projects discussed in the book cover a wide variety of focuses, including: how to increase information literacy (IL) for first-year students; learner-led design; community-based learning; and a librarian mentor programme. Many of the models provide examples of how to engage first-year seminar students but also discuss ways to engage upper-level students and the wider community to promote a college-going community. The emphasis is on group work, learning to identify different types of sources, developing critical thinking, writing skills, reading research articles and teaching students how to create lesson plans.

The book also explores for-credit courses that librarians provided to teach students IL skills. Collaborative projects proved to help engage students and helped them gain confidence amongst their peers. Peer-to-peer feedback was important in helping the students develop leadership skills, learn to evaluate others' work and think critically.

Another project focused on having upper-level graphic design students create products such as bookmarks, buttons and posters to teach library terminology. This project incorporates the use of graphic design software to help students better their skill set in their area of study and create products for the library.

Engaging students through community-based learning programmes focused on collaborating with local junior high schools to build a college-going community. Through community-based learning undergraduate students developed a semester-long IL skills lesson plan for sixth-graders. This programme put undergraduates in the role of the teacher and helped them foster a connection with the junior high students to help prepare them for college-level research skills. This model was beneficial for both the undergraduate and junior high school students.

Programmes where librarians are mentors to undergraduate students are explored as well. In this type of programme, the librarian dedicates a portion of their time to mentoring undergraduate students. Through this model, the librarian introduces the student to IL and librarianship, and assigns readings to accompany these lessons. Students develop their research skills and work towards creating a final project that will be added to the library’s archives. Students also get to display their scholarship in the culminating Student Summer Scholar Showcase.

Learner-led design is discussed and proves to be ideal for helping undergraduate students learn new skills. Learner-led design is showcased in the case study of the programme WI+RE (Writing Instruction + Research Education). In this case study students created instructional
media to teach research and writing skills. This programme was a paid internship and poses the possibility of other libraries offering such a programme either through library funds or through a grant. Putting students in the instructor role proves to be beneficial for students creating the lesson and their peers.

A common theme among the nine high-impact models is collaboration. Collaboration, whether with their peers, faculty, librarians or the community, is key to helping students grow and increase their knowledge. This book displays ways to effectively develop collaboration skills among students. It also focuses on models where students are in the role of the instructor. Students acting as instructors helps promote engagement for the students and their peers, and creates lessons and learning aides that are easier for the students to understand. Peer-to-peer evaluation was also an impactful way to develop leadership skills and critical thinking skills, and to practise evaluating others’ work.

This book is ideal for the academic librarian who would like to broaden their programmes, services and campus engagement. This book is also excellent for the academic librarian who has been collaborating with the campus community and would like to connect with the outside community and promote higher education. The reader is invited to explore the different high impact models to find new ideas to implement. Each model provides a case study and a literature review to provide background research and ways to implement the project in the academic library.