Embedded Library Instruction in Undergraduate Research Classes

Assessing the Impact

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George Mason University

- 33,000 total students, more than 20,000 undergraduates
- 198 degree programs at 3 distributed campuses, 75 undergraduate degree programs
- Diverse student population
- Undergraduate research was adopted as our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) initiative
Students as Scholars at Mason

*Students as Scholars* aims to foster a culture of student scholarship through increased participation in and celebration of scholarly activities.

Students will see their education as a process of scholarly inquiry, where scholarship is valued as a core practice of the Mason student experience.
Students as Scholars Activities

- Helping students find a project and mentor
- Funding undergraduate research and creative projects
- Providing student travel grants
- Facilitating faculty and curriculum development
- Hosting the annual Celebration of Scholarship
Student Learning Outcomes

**Creation of Scholarship**
- Create an original scholarly or creative project
- Communicate knowledge from an original scholarly or creative project

**Scholarly Inquiry**
- Articulate a scholarly question; engage in key elements of the scholarly process; and situate the concepts, practices, or results of scholarship within a broader context

**Discovery of Scholarship**
- Understand how knowledge is generated and disseminated through scholarship, and the importance of scholarship to society

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RS Courses

Research and Scholarship Intensive (RS) Courses

- Students actively participate in the process of scholarship and make a significant contribution to the creation of a disciplinary-appropriate product

- RS courses must meet the student learning outcomes:
  - Students will create an original scholarly or creative project
  - Students will communicate knowledge from an original scholarly or creative project
Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) received a multi-year grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services to develop assessment skills among 300 academic libraries.

ACRL developed Assessment in Action Initiative:
- Mason won a spot in the first cohort
- Project needed to demonstrate impact for the larger campus community
- Learning to assess impact was primary focus
Mason’s Assessment in Action Project

- Project Need
  - Communication gap between faculty and librarians
  - Poor connection between librarian teaching activities and course expectations and outcomes
  - Lack of feedback to librarians about how their efforts impact student performance

- Congruence between Students as Scholars and library information literacy learning outcomes

- Desire to systematically assess the outcomes
Undergraduate students will be more fully supported to engage in scholarly inquiry, creative activities, and research

Students: Develop skills to successfully address scholarly questions

Faculty: Improved collaboration with University Libraries to enhance faculty capacity to teach research skills to undergraduates

Library: Improved ability to collaborate with faculty on teaching research skills to undergraduates; Improved ability to assess the success of collaborative efforts
Assessment in Action Project Activities

- Paired librarians with RS course faculty
  - Librarians worked with faculty to review syllabi and assignments

- Librarians administered Mason Research Practices Survey to students at semester start

- Librarians worked with students and faculty according to their needs

- Librarians administered End of Semester Survey to assess student experience

- Librarians reviewed student work using Students as Scholars rubric and attended presentations

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Assessing the Partnerships

- **Participants**
  - 299 students in 13 RS courses across 12 departments
  - 19 course sections over 2 semesters
  - 18 faculty paired with 14 librarians

- **Assessment Activities**
  - **Students**: Mason Research Practices Survey, OSCAR Student Survey, ratings on *Students as Scholars* rubric, end of semester survey
  - **Faculty**: faculty email survey
  - **Library**: wiki, end of project focus group
Selected Results: Students

- 75% or more of students thought that the course contributed to their learning on 5 items measuring information literacy (OSCAR Student Survey, n=101)

- Students who met with a librarian (~79%) were most likely to report learning how to search for information or use databases (58%); and how to use citation tools, like Zotero (13%) (End of Semester Survey, n=109)

- Librarians rated 71 final products on the Students as Scholars Inquiry rubric
Ratings on Inquiry Rubric

Rubric Ratings
N=71

- Expert: 6%
- Proficient: 55%
- Emerging: 31%
- Novice: 8%

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9 of 18 faculty members participating in the project responded to a summative email survey about their experience.

All 9 reported positive working relationships with their librarians, and plan to work with the Libraries again, noting the partnership as “central” or “essential” to their courses.

The courses in which librarians visited multiple times were considered by faculty to create the most productive relationships with students.
Selected Results: Library

Responses are based on response data from project wiki and end-of-semester focus group with participating librarians.
Results Summary

Undergraduate students will be more fully supported to engage in scholarly inquiry, creative activities, and research.

Overall, the partnerships in which faculty and librarians worked together in a collaborative and sustained way produced the best results for students, faculty, and librarians.
Future Plans

- Continue to pair librarians with OSCAR research courses
- Use the Mason Research Practices Survey to assess information literacy skills
- Encourage collaboration between faculty and librarians on research assignments
- Facilitate librarian access to student final products
- Include librarians in assessment of OSCAR learning outcomes
On Your Campus

- Who might be potential partners for this kind of project?
- Are there existing programs, outcomes, mission statements, etc. that you can use to focus a partnership?
- Have there been partnership efforts in the past? What were the outcomes?
- How would you scale this project for your campus? What might be the challenges and opportunities?
- How could librarians and faculty work together to enhance each others’ efforts?
Discussion and Questions

Project and assessment materials available at
assessment.gmu.edu

Students as Scholars

oscar.gmu.edu