

Library Concurrence: Academic Librarians and School Librarians Working Together with Dual Enrollment Students and Faculty

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Concurrent enrollment, dual enrollment, dual credit--the labels vary but they all describe course offerings for a growing population of college students who are still high school students. The common element of a dual credit course is that upon successful completion, enrolled high school students may earn college credits while simultaneously earning credits towards a high school diploma. It is becoming a popular way for high schools to offer more advanced curricula and to provide students with an early introduction to higher education.

A 2013 National Center for Education Statistics publication indicates that 82% of public high schools in the United States had students enrolled in a dual credit course with a total enrollment of about 2 million (Marken, Gray, & Lewis, 2013). Although a large number of public schools offer dual credit courses, not all states have initiated dual credit programs. The Education Commission of the States (2013) reports that 47 states and the District of Columbia have some type of framework for at least one statewide dual enrollment program. Indiana is one of these states.

Indiana requires that all high schools offer at least two dual credit courses to eligible students. Students are not required to take a dual credit course, but the nearly 500,000 students enrolled in grades 7-12 (STATS Indiana, 2013) is a large pool of potential new college students. Currently 38 Indiana university/college campuses offer dual credit courses. In 2007 these universities and colleges cooperatively developed the *Core Transfer Library* (CTL) which now lists over 60 courses that are transferable among all public universities in Indiana and a few private universities as well (Indiana Department of Education & Indiana Commission for Higher Education, 2012). High schools can take advantage of this statewide system and offer dual credit courses from any of the participating state universities to their students. Students can earn college credits for a math course from one university and an English course from another university and both are acceptable at any of the Indiana public universities in which they may ultimately enroll after high school.

Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne (IPFW) began offering dual credit courses in 2005 in an initiative named Collegiate Connection. Piloting the program with one school, the Collegiate Connection program has grown dramatically in the last eight years with increased impact on university

resources to manage the program and an opportunity for recruitment and retention. Today IPFW's Collegiate Connection program has an enrollment of over 3,000 students in 44 high schools and is accredited by the National Alliance of Concurrent Enrollment Partnerships. IPFW is one of only 16 institutions in the state to be part of the Preferred Dual Credit Provider List, which has the distinction of offering courses "... taught by high school teachers to high school students throughout the regular high school day" (Center of Excellence in Leadership of Learning, University of Indianapolis, 2012, p. 3). This distinction of working with students in the high school environment has presented us with challenges as academic librarians. These students are unique and face a few more hurdles than on-campus freshmen.

Strategy

The Helmke Library's virtual environment is a resource-rich area for all our students especially those taking courses from off-campus. We recognized the importance of introducing these students and instructors to the university library resources to which they are entitled as dually enrolled IPFW students and adjunct instructors. The typical student enrolled in a Collegiate Connection course, however, is not coming to campus for a face-to-face class meeting, nor are they traditional distance learning students; they are in a familiar academic setting with their peers being taught by their high school teachers. These students and teachers likely already have a library in their school and know their librarian. So how does an academic librarian reach these students and their high school teachers who are now also adjunct college instructors? We decided to approach our colleagues already embedded in the schools, the high school librarians.

We committed to working with our librarian colleagues in the schools because keeping the high school librarians in the loop recognizes their role in the education process, enhances their profile within the school, facilitates access for students and faculty, and enhances the promotional efforts for the library and the university. The high school librarians became our ambassadors in the schools, reminding students and faculty of the academic library at their disposal both physically and virtually.

Helmke Library is the largest academic library in northeast Indiana which is open to the public and is well-known to the community.

In 2011, we initiated a meeting with the administrators of IPFW's Collegiate Connection program to explore how the library, as a key contributor to students' academic success, could be involved in this initiative. The library made a strong case for inclusion in the formal orientation activities for Collegiate Connection faculty and school administrators and also proposed website links and other publicity to showcase library access as one of the academic benefits of the program for both students and faculty. The library is now recognized as a core component of the program and is included in the *IPFW Collegiate Connection Student Handbook* and publicity.

Our individual outreach efforts to high school librarians were well-received by the IPFW Collegiate Connection administrators who invited the high school librarians to orientation sessions and agreed to pay them a stipend for attendance at library workshops. We have hosted three IPFW-sponsored two-hour workshops in the Helmke Library for Collegiate Connection high school librarians, during which we demonstrated the library resources available to Collegiate Connection students and their instructors and to assist in eliminating barriers to accessing IPFW resources. We have been added to the IPFW orientation workshop schedule for faculty and were invited to speak briefly to the guidance counselors at an annual gathering at IPFW. In many high schools, the guidance counselors administer the dual credit programs.

Our liaison subject librarians have held instructional sessions for students at their high school and on the IPFW campus. Since 2012, nearly 400 dually-enrolled high school students in classes of psychology, philosophy, history and writing have participated in library orientations which highlight the use of library resources in person, and more importantly, the availability of the majority of those resources virtually. These orientations are generally connected to a research assignment.

Librarians' Involvement

IPFW librarians began interacting with high school students enrolled in the University's Collegiate Connection program in classroom sessions in December of 2011. The content of the sessions continues to evolve as each brings new information to librarians and instructors alike regarding the most essential procedures and skills needed by these novice college students. Curricular challenges fell into three categories: communication of basic login procedures for access to the IPFW Library's online resources; familiarity with the library's website; and, selection and navigation of databases. Our first classroom encounter took place at South Side High School where two IPFW librarians introduced students in IPFW Ethics, Philosophy, and Psychology classes to the sources most useful for their assignments.

The total enrollment was 62 dual-credit students; however, the classes also included students not enrolled in the program so the actual number of students exposed to the library's resources was higher.

This had the advantage of reaching out to other potential college-bound students; the downside was that some of the students were not able to access the sources we were teaching without an IPFW username and password.

These classes were taught by Tiff Adkins, IPFW Outreach and Education Librarian and Susan Skekloff, IPFW Social Sciences and Humanities Librarian. We quickly learned that the Collegiate Connection students, not unlike other freshmen, did not always know their IPFW user names and passwords that are necessary to access our subscription databases from off-campus, limiting the critical hands-on experience. This was our first major lesson: we need to insure that both instructors and students know their IPFW access credentials as part of the preparatory arrangements for the session.

The content of the initial sessions was at the core of those which would come later with other students. We introduced the library's website, our core interdisciplinary journal database, basic search strategy techniques, and finally gave a brief overview of the specialized databases in philosophy and psychology. Judging by the number of questions about databases and search strategy, both students enrolled in the program and those who were not, were very engaged and interested in the resources available. This initial experience was ideal in several respects: we had the entire class period to present our material and interact with the students and the instructor was a supportive and active presence during each class. While we had some knowledge of the assignment in advance of the classes, more detail regarding assignment requirements, such as suggested databases, would have allowed us to tailor our instruction more effectively. We were also able to meet with the school librarian during the lunch hour period and gain perspective on the sources available to the students in the high school library.

As the number of Collegiate Connection high school participants grew, we realized that it was not possible for librarians to travel to all of the locations. Subsequent library sessions for the Collegiate Connection learners were conducted as part of field trips to the IPFW campus, typically arranged by a Collegiate Connection administrator. The numbers of students who have come to campus during these trips has ranged from 20 to 82 at any given time. In most cases more than one class section comes on the day of the trip. They are divided into two or three groups and rotate between the Learning Commons, Writing Center and library computer classroom. The majority of these classes are comprised of students enrolled in our introductory composition course and the subject librarian for the Department of English and Linguistics, Susan Skekloff, has conducted the library session.

There are approximately 30-minutes to stress the user name and password, make the website a familiar and user-friendly guide to their research, and emphasize how to select the best databases for the upcoming assignment.

When introducing the website, a course-specific library guide is selected to demonstrate the sources most often needed by IPFW students taking this course on campus or online. This has the added advantage of introducing the high school instructor to the course guide and its resources.

What lessons have come out of the field trip sessions as opposed to the high school in-person visits? Students have a busy agenda for the field trip and catching and retaining their focus on library-related content is not as easy. The high school instructor is usually present during only one of the library introductions; a teaching aide or parent may provide the adult presence in the other one or two sessions with the librarian. Thus the high school instructor may or may not be present to reinforce the significance of targeted library resources or be introduced to the library course guide. Also, we are often unable to get the assignment the students are currently working on prior to the day of the session. Due to the unequal lengths of the University academic semester and the high-school academic year, sometimes another library related assignment may not be due for a month or two later. This is especially the case in the composition course which often incorporates both rhetorical analysis and literary criticism assignments. We find it essential to concentrate on the assignment which will be due first and touch briefly on resources for later assignments.

On the other hand, the field trip format has some advantages over going to the high school classroom. It brings the students directly to the campus environment and the University's Library. It allows the students to visit our Library Learning Commons, one of the most popular spaces on campus, and to interact with staff in the IPFW Writing Center, our Learning Commons partner. All of the students who come to campus are enrolled in the Collegiate Connection program and are able to use the databases introduced during the session. The technological glitches may be less likely when on campus so the librarian can concentrate on providing a welcoming and inviting presence and instructional guidance in the setting of a college classroom.

No matter the setting, the Collegiate Connection students are very interactive and have many questions, both library- and university-related, for the librarian. They are very motivated, seeking out answers to questions which the librarian may pose and asking many of their own. There have been some follow-up reference questions via email from students and instructors, and a few in-person appointments with students. The unexpected questions are a delight also such as: How did you get your job and what do you do when you are not teaching us?

The next steps to improve the quality of the library classroom component of the program are related to communication and time. More direct communication with the high school instructor and high school librarian would have positive results. If we have the assignment well in advance of the trip to campus, our online course guides could be emailed to both the instructor and the high school librarian prior to the session asking for possible feedback on which sources might be the best to emphasize. It would also be ideal if the high school librarian could accompany every Collegiate Connection class visiting our library. This scenario would help us to hear directly from school librarians what sources they might currently be incorporating. Fortunately, we do get phone calls and emails from high school librarians with Collegiate Connection student questions. We also have anecdotal evidence of classmates of Collegiate Connection students seeking research assistance at our library. This encourages us to use every opportunity to remind the Collegiate Connection students we interact with that we are team players with their school librarians.

Value to the Institution and the Collegiate Connection Program

Our involvement with the Collegiate Connection program began with a realization of the growing size of this program and the importance of library outreach to this group of IPFW freshmen both for recruitment and retention. The IPFW vision and strategic plan envision IPFW as a collaborator with the community, business and industry to drive the economic, social, intellectual and cultural development of the region. IPFW's involvement with the region's schools fosters individual student and community development. Additionally, the Collegiate Connection program is an important recruitment and retention initiative.

Once the library became part of the program, we were committed to including the school librarians as valuable professional colleagues who could assist the faculty and students on-site and could remind participants of Helmke Library resources available to them as one of the benefits of being an IPFW student.

For the Collegiate Connection students, our belief is that an early introduction to the academic resources and support as well as a friendly staff will make the library a more used and welcoming presence for new students, ultimately strengthening not only recruitment but also retention of these students. Along with academic department contact persons and program administrators, our faces and presence in orientation meetings and classroom sessions become part of the IPFW total experience. The library has become part of the effort to enhance the school/student relationship and introduces the students to resources to enhance their college readiness.

Although these high school programs are not identified or discussed in the Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) initiative, they have many things in common with efforts such as first-year seminars or learning communities in that they reach entering students and provide an early first-year-type experience and clearly "place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, ... information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies" (Kuh, 2008, p. 1).

While we have a goal of better data-gathering and assessment of our impact, our qualitative sense is that the outreach and efforts are appreciated by the high school librarians, by the campus administrators of the program and particularly by the students who have used the library for their courses.

The library demonstrated initiative in being involved and contributing to the campus program. We have provided personalized attention to individuals and classes of students and have concentrated on building a foundation of library awareness and information literacy which will support the students' academic success.

We have successfully marketed the library to the Collegiate Connection administrators on campus. A side benefit has been to increase awareness in non-academic units that help administer this program of the importance of library resources for all of our students and faculty. The library initiated the contact and offer of service and "grew" the involvement.

We have been tracking the questions which come from Collegiate Connection students in our Library user statistics; another possible direction of data-gathering is augmenting the data collection to learn whether questions are related to subject content or to navigation of the library and campus as a whole.

We have also tried to streamline some of the bureaucratic/administrative systems which are crucial for students off-campus but are difficult to navigate and are new to beginning college students. As an example, all students are assigned a username and password in addition to a university ID card. Many of these high school students simply do not retain this information and may not know their social security numbers and therefore are not accessing useful resources such as their university email accounts or importantly for us, logins to library databases from off-campus. Anecdotally, there are many encounters with these students in the library which begin with a reference interaction and end with an in-depth session of ferreting out usernames, talking about university ID cards and providing a guided referral to university IT if we cannot solve the administrative issues. We have worked with administrators and all classes coming to IPFW to remind them of the importance of the passwords and have put notices on the Collegiate Connection website and have relayed concerns to the Collegiate Connection administrators.

We hope that our 'above & beyond' assistance in these areas contributes to the students' sense of knowledgeable, helpful people as resources in the library. By highlighting the staff, service and the 'interpreter/guide' role of the library in addition to the sense of place of the library facility, we hope to engender a sense of belonging and feeling at home. Grallo et al. (2012), have explored this role of the library as "a safe place a student may go to find answers," (p. 190) and suggest that sharing the students' concerns and issues with other campus stakeholders ultimately "aid[s] in the development of programs and services designed to help students adjust to campus life and, ultimately, succeed" (p. 182).

Lessons Learned: Benefits and Challenges

In summary, the Helmke Library's involvement with Collegiate Connection over almost three years has yielded new professional networks with school librarians and has contributed to IPFW's mission and goals related to student recruitment and also to community involvement in northeast Indiana. This list enumerates some of the many benefits as well as the challenges and next steps in partnering with Collegiate Connection school librarians, faculty and students.

Benefits

- Supports institutional mission of increasing recruitment and retention
- Expands resource base of participating high-school students
- Supports faculty in high schools
- Supports solo librarians in high schools
- Expands interaction with departments across the university campus
- Enhances library as campus partner; librarians serve as observers and conduits of student concerns
- Maintaining momentum and contacts
- Coordinating technical requirements and support for enrolled students (passwords etc.)
- Assessing and measuring impact of our library instruction and publicity

Next Steps and Program Building

- Strengthen publicity related to library involvement
- Continue coordination with campus partners such as The Writing Center
- Seek out mechanism for proactive contact with high school faculty
- Secure regular feedback from students and instructors
- Determine best practices and scalable model for library instruction for Collegiate Connection students

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