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Introducing Undergraduates to Open Access and the Power of Collaboration Between Scholarly Communications and Instruction Librarians

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Introducing Undergraduates to Open Access and the Power of Collaboration Between Scholarly Communications and Instruction Librarians

Session Type

Event

Abstract

Undergraduates are often left out of conversations surrounding open access. While they may not share the same concerns about publishing and prestige as faculty and graduate students, they do consume vast amounts of information, and thus can benefit just as much as those farther in their academic careers by knowing how to find, evaluate, and use open access resources. This presentation highlights a successful collaboration between the presenters in their respective roles as scholarly communications librarian and course developer to create and implement curriculum for a 3-unit information literacy course to teach undergraduate students about open access principles. Once the curriculum was taught in different sections of the course by various faculty, focus groups were conducted to assess curriculum efficacy. Highlights from the focus group feedback will be shared. The presenters will also explain how this experience prepared them to expand their respective roles into the realms of supporting undergraduate production of open access materials and the utilization of OERs by faculty.

Location

KIPJ Theatre

Introducing Undergraduates to Open Access and the Power of
Collaboration Between Scholarly Communications and Instruction
Librarians

Presented at the 2015 Digital Initiatives Symposium
April 29, 2015
University of San Diego

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Abstract

Undergraduates are often left out of conversations surrounding open access. While they may not share the same concerns about publishing and prestige as faculty and graduate students, they do consume vast amounts of information, and thus can benefit just as much as those farther in their academic careers by knowing how to find, evaluate, and use open access resources. This presentation highlights a successful collaboration between the presenters in their respective roles as scholarly communications librarian and course developer to create and implement curriculum for a 3-unit information literacy course to teach undergraduate students about open access principles. Once the curriculum was taught in different sections of the course by various faculty, focus groups were conducted to assess curriculum efficacy. Highlights from the focus group feedback will be shared. The presenters will also explain how this experience prepared them to expand their respective roles into the realms of supporting undergraduate production of open access materials and the utilization of OERs by faculty.

About us

Kristin Laughtin-Dunker is the Coordinator of Scholarly Communications & Electronic Resources at Chapman University.

Annie Knight is a Reference and Instruction Librarian at Santa Ana College, and the Open Education Resources library liaison. She was formerly the Coordinator of Brandman University Library Services at Chapman University.

What we did

Created and implemented curriculum for a 3-unit information literacy course to teach undergraduate students about open access.

What is Brandman University?

- Brandman University is the online sister school to Chapman University.
- They both operate as part of the Chapman University System.
- The Leatherby Libraries provide resources and support to both Chapman and Brandman students.

What is LBSU 302?

LBSU 302 Information Fluency and Academic Integrity

This course is designed to provide students with lifelong research and information literacy skills. Students will gain working knowledge of library resources as well as those within their profession. Coursework is designed to engage students as active researchers honing their ability to evaluate, analyze, organize, synthesize, and ethically use information. Emphasis will be placed on utilizing digital tools to locate information and present findings in a virtual environment. (Must be taken within first two sessions after matriculation if ENGU 103 and ENGU 104 are satisfied, or within the first two sessions after those requirements are completed.) 3 credits.

Why teach about OA?

Purpose

- To explore concepts and ethics surrounding scholarship, copyright, and information access
- Introduce research tools students can take with them beyond the university and their university library access.

Week 6 - “Academic Integrity and Intellectual Property”

Concepts introduced:

- Academic Integrity (as it applies to the university’s Student Conduct Code)
- Intellectual Property
- Copyright
- Copyright alternatives, such as Creative Commons
- And, finally, Open Access. (majority of time spent)

Class Activities:

- Readings (course text and online content)
- Discussions in -class (hybrid) and discussion board (online) involving concepts above
- Examining subscription-based journal copyright statements as compared to CC license options
- Exploring OA journal repositories and practicing search strategies
- OA guided search assignment

OA Guided Search Assignment

- Using various OA repositories, students were assigned to locate, select, and evaluate two OA journal articles related their individual research question
- Practiced research strategies introduced in previous weeks for utilizing scholarly resources
- Developed their ongoing research narrative
- Contributed to their final course projects

Then along comes a scholarly communications librarian ...

- Scholarly communication expertise provides the opportunity for unique collaboration and honing the course's OA curriculum.
- Turning flat pedagogy into that which is more critical and engaging for students.

So, we created an OA presentation aimed at an undergraduate audience

There were a number of issues to consider:

- Relevancy of information
 - Much OA conversation is focused on the publishing needs of faculty. What is important for undergraduates to know?
- Information literacy levels
 - What and how should we teach undergraduates about OA without overshooting their current information literacy?
- Research needs
 - What information is going to best help undergraduates with the types of research they will be conducting in the next few years?

Overview of the presentation

Topics covered:

- What is open access?
- Why is OA important?
- Open access models (green vs. gold, OSTP mandate)
- Where to find OA materials
- OA journal collections (DOAJ, OAJSE)
- Open Access Button
- How to evaluate open access publications

- Articles found on Google
- Disreputable publishers
- Open Access Scholarly Publishers Association
- List of open access resources

The presentation is viewable at http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/library_presentations/5/.

LBSU 302 Faculty Focus Group

- A focus group was conducted with the LBSU 302 faculty community to learn the following:
 - How effective was the revised approach to the course's OA pedagogy?
 - How can we improve the curriculum?

Focus Group Questions & Responses

Question 1: Do you feel teaching your students about OA resources enhances their research skills? If so, in what ways? If not, why?

- Faculty felt this was very important.
- Students tend to gravitate toward the Internet when conducting research, so it makes sense to help them find scholarly articles there.
- Broadens their research perspectives by providing another avenue of information.
- Allows them more opportunity to find current information (vs. embargoed content in journal packages).
- Exposes them to the philosophy of OA vs. paywalls.
- Enlightens them about the growing momentum of the OA movement.

Question 2: When students first begin your course, what is their level of OA knowledge? How can you tell?

- Most have little or no knowledge of OA at the beginning of course.
 - Main sources of information: Google and YouTube.
 - Some know Google Books or Google Scholar.
- Students hadn't broken down their information-hunting processes in the past.
- Students who had studied at a community college beforehand had more exposure to OA resources.

Question 3: What is the value in teaching students about OA resources? Does it have value?

- It has value, but is more successful in some topic areas than others.
- Expands students' ability to find information and provides them another avenue for it.
- Some found more information through OA resources than library databases, depending on their topics.
- Others found more up-to-date information.
- Provides students with a useful tool for future courses, or for when they are no longer affiliated with the university and cannot access licensed resources.

Question 4: How can we evaluate whether students are searching for OA resources from reputable sources rather than getting lucky Google hits?

- Students were required to write research notes detailing their search processes and how they found the OA articles.
- One faculty member suggested requiring students to use DOAJ or the Open Access Journals Search Engine.
- Also listened to student comments about the limits of OA search interfaces and the prevalence of foreign language content as evidence of their search processes.

Question 5: What feedback are you getting from your students about the OA article assignment?

- Some preferred the library interface if they were already using it.
- Some wanted to stick to Google Scholar.
- Others found more information with OA articles and thought the quality was higher than in Google Scholar.
- Most reported unfamiliarity with OA before the course.
- Most faculty noted that their students found OA straightforward and had few questions.
 - One reported that the students found this to be one of the more difficult assignments and felt they were less successful at finding information, despite spending more time looking for resources.

Question 6: How could we as faculty more effectively evaluate students' use of these resources?

- Faculty commented on their limited time, but liked the idea of requiring research notes that they could spot-check.
- One suggested requiring at least one OA resource in each literature review and annotated bibliography assignment for the course.
- One was unsure what to do aside from asking students how they felt about the assignment.
 - Also noted that the students were getting too caught up in evaluating articles via the TRAAP* test we teach to information literacy classes.
- Others felt that if the students are finding useful articles, then they are using OA resources well. They felt the assignment was good enough and thought the video tutorial useful for both students and faculty.

*TRAAP: Timeliness, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, Point of View

Question 7: What aspects of OA are important for undergraduate students to understand in order to successfully utilize these resources for research assignments?

- Knowing about the existence of OA resources is most important!
- Secondly is knowing proper search strategies (which is not specific to OA).
- Weren't sure that knowing about hoax sites is important for students at the undergraduate level.

Question 8: What ideas do you have for improving our current model for teaching OA to LBSU 302 students?

- Many liked the current model and felt that students learn best by doing.
- Some felt Kristin's video tutorial should be required for each class.

- Some did not use it in class due to the length, but liked the video and would assign it otherwise.
- Suggestions for improvement:
 - Offer more examples of OA sites
 - Have the faculty member perform sample searches to showcase how basic the search interfaces are.

Impact on future pedagogy

- A need for greater instruction and support for students in the following academic and information competencies:
 - Reading comprehension (evaluating information) involved with academic research.
 - Search strategies to increase digital information fluency and the effective use of different (OA) databases and repositories.
- For live sessions, reduce or downplay the section on disreputable publishers.
 - Students using the recording can be instructed to skip over this part unless they wish to know more.
 - Future recordings (that reflect new developments in the OA world) can reduce or eliminate this section.

New open access initiatives for undergraduate students

- Greater confidence introducing OA during scaled down teachable moments within 1-hour library workshops and reference interviews.
- Developing a future library workshop on reading strategies for scholarly articles.
- Incorporating OA instruction content and activities within a for-credit course context. (LIS 103: Advanced Internet Searching, 1-unit)
 - Developing a group wiki project - developing a collaborative bibliography that includes OA sources.
- Applying lessons from OA culture to librarian liaison work involving OER.
- Undergraduate students can be producers of open access content, too, especially through institutional repository initiatives!
- At Chapman University, we have begun loading posters and abstracts from our semi-annual Undergraduate Student Research Days into our repository, Chapman University Digital Commons.
 - Initiative came from the student government president, who recognized the Digital Commons as a solution to a growing student desire for a place to publish exceptional work.
 - The Coordinator of Scholarly Communications worked with the Office of Undergraduate Research to include the option to deposit in Digital Commons when submitting the research proposal to the OUR.
 - After each research day, the students are contacted again to make sure they haven't changed their mind. Faculty co-authors are also contacted to make sure they have no objections.

- The Coordinator of Scholarly Communications retrieves the posters from Blackboard and loads them into Digital Commons.
- Results:
 - Supports undergraduates as participators and producers in the OA movement.
 - 80 posters were deposited after the first eligible Undergraduate Student Research Day, representing about $\frac{2}{3}$ of the participants.
 - While participation is voluntary for most students, at least one professor has begun requiring her students to deposit their work and is using this opportunity to teach them about the importance of communicating their scholarly findings.
 - Students now have a stable home for their exceptional research, which they can advertise to future employers, graduate schools, award committees, and friends and family.
 - They also get usage statistics that help them see the impact their research is having around the world.
 - Chapman University Undergraduate Student Research Day Abstracts and Posters: http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/cusrd_abstracts/
- Kevin and Tam Ross Undergraduate Research Prize
 - As a result of seeing the impact of undergraduate work in both our own and others' institutional repositories, the prize committee for the Kevin and Tam Ross Undergraduate Research Prize sought to move the submission process into Digital Commons.
 - They also began offering publication in Digital Commons as a prize:
 - The winners will have their contest entries, an essay explaining their use of library resources for a specific paper or project, published in Digital Commons.
 - They will also have the opportunity to have the resulting paper or project published in Digital Commons as well, boosting their scholarly prestige.
 - Kevin and Tam Ross Undergraduate Research Prize: <http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/undergraduateresearchprize/>

The full slides from this presentation are available at http://digitalcommons.chapman.edu/library_presentations/10/.