

Distance Outreach Within the Course Management System

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Issue:

Distance/Online students = 63% of SAU's enrollment

- ✗ Students contacting the library self-report a lack of skills/confidence when researching, using computers/technology
- ✗ No universal research or information literacy class available
- ✗ Individual courses are typically completed in 7 weeks

Librarians have faculty status at SAU

- ✗ Mixed awareness of librarian capabilities amongst students and faculty.
- ✗ No direct listserv made available for librarians to reach all distance students
- ✗ Library instruction given on an as-requested basis (faculty or student).

We tried something a little different:

Spring '18: *COM608: Research Methods and Applications*: I was invited to take part in his class alongside primary professor. Class hosted on Blackboard.

- Taught 1 hr. library orientation/advanced research skills seminar.
- Recorded during synchronous instruction; link shared with all class members.
- Interacted with students in weeks 3 & 4 discussion boards alongside their primary professor – responded at least 1x to each student and replied to every response/question I received.
- Graded the resources chosen and APA citations in the students' papers.

What went well:

- ✓ Great opportunity to “get in the trenches” with the students as their “guide on the side.”
- ✓ Opportunity for the students to learn by doing.
- ✓ Students gained deeper understanding of research skills and available resources.
- ✓ Opened communication between librarian and students who had questions.
- ✓ Uncovered questions students may not have realized they had.

Challenges:

- ✗ If more classes took this approach, it could easily become unmanageable time-wise with daily activities and limited number of available personnel.
- ✗ Some students didn't reach out; ultimately reflected in their work. Unsure how to promote greater interaction.

Overall Takeaway:

This was definitely a worthwhile opportunity. When this professor teaches this class again, we will use a similar approach, but we will perfect some of the snags we encountered the first time. We eventually hope to create meaningful guides for students based on this experience.




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White Library