EMBEDDED LIBRARIANSHIP:
CONNECTING THE DOTS

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AVOIDING THE FALLS

PIT
Poll #1

What type of library setting do you work in (or are you primarily interested in):

- Academic library
- Public library
- Primary / secondary education
- Specialized library ... none of the above
Agenda

Start  Introduction and Why We’re Here

0:10  Attributes of Embedded Librarianship

0:25  Connecting the Dots: “Best Practices” and How to Adapt Them

0:50  Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them

1:10  Q & A

1:30  Close
Learning objectives

At the conclusion of the workshop participants will:

- Understand the essential characteristics of embedded librarianship
- Adapt successful strategies to their organizations and communities
- Avoid or mitigate practices that can detract from success
Part 1: Attributes of embedded librarianship

Part 2: “Best practices” and how to adapt them

Part 3: Pitfalls and how to avoid them
Graph 1

- Interlibrary Borrowing (+145%)
- No. in Grp Pres. (144%)
- No. of Grp Pres. (+81)
- Total Students (+34%)
- Total Staff (-11%)
- Initial Circulation (-44%)
- Reference Transactions (-69%)

***Total Circulation statistics not collected in 2011-12.
Definition

- Relationship
- Shared Goals
- Custom, High-value Contributions
- Success
What Embedded Librarianship Is Not
The Embedded Model Is A Continuum
Poll #2

What’s Your Experience with Embedded Librarianship?

- Not embedded / haven’t initiated this
- Early stage of development
- Mature / been doing it for awhile
Part 1: Attributes of embedded librarianship

Part 2: “Best Practices” and how to adapt them

Part 3: Pitfalls and how to avoid them
Preparing: Assess readiness

Initiating: Set priorities, allocate resources

Sustaining: Internal and external coordination
Key Factors

Librarians
- Professional skills
  - Research & Analysis
  - Teaching
- Content management
- Context knowledge
- Domain knowledge
- Interpersonal / social skills

Organization
- Executive champion
- Respected clients
- Middle management relationships
- Autonomy
- Management culture
Assessing Readiness

- High Librarian Readiness and High Organization Readiness
- High Librarian Readiness and Low Organization Readiness
- Low Librarian Readiness and High Organization Readiness
- Low Librarian Readiness and Low Organization Readiness

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Translating Readiness to Action

Q1: Implement embedded services as a strategic priority

Q2: Empower library staff. Build organizational readiness

Q3: Lay the groundwork

Q4: Develop and engage library staff to seize the opportunities

Organization Readiness

Librarian Readiness

Low

High

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Initiation Phase Principles

Managers must lead AND empower staff
- Library manager must be proactive; Both library and customer group managers must commit
- Staff must take initiative too

Run pilot projects and scale up
- Big initiatives often stumble
- A model of success can be replicated

Prioritize actions
- Balance the “low hanging fruit” with the “gold strike” initiatives for short term wins
Build Relationships

Actions:

- Leverage existing service connections
- Volunteer!
- Promote your capabilities
Achieve Shared Understanding and Goals

Actions:

- Learn about the people and the work
- Identify needs and solve problems
- Get management on board
Develop Collaboration

Actions:

• Deliver customized, high-value work
• Ask for feedback
• Keep in touch with managers and colleagues
Which came first: the work, or the relationship?
Sustaining Phase Principles

Don’t Stop Marketing!
• Segment the audiences
• Use appropriate media and messages

Assure Quality and Institutionalize Evaluation
• Success depends on high quality and added value
• Encourage librarians’ professional development
• Evaluate and communicate

Keep Up Management Relationships
• Maintain two-way communication and commitment
Follow Marketing Principles

Actions:

• Identify target audiences and influencers too
• Use different messages that resonate with each group
• Use old and new media: word of mouth, orientations, social media ...
Assure Quality, and Measure It

Actions:

• Align staff skill sets to client needs
• Develop staff domain knowledge as well as librarianship skills
• Align metrics with your organization
Maintain Management Ties

Actions:

• Get client manager input to evaluation
• Ask as well as offer
• Communicate metrics and results
Review: The “Virtuous Cycle”

1. Hire staff who can build relationships

2. Let them learn the organization and the subject domain

3. Empower them to offer the right services

4. Build alliances with customer management

5. Support librarians’ work

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Part 1: Attributes of embedded librarians

Part 2: “Best Practices” and how to adapt them

Part 3: Pitfalls and how to avoid them
Pitfall #1:  
Startup Phase: Can’t Get Traction

**Actions:**

- Assess readiness
- Start small
- Focus on understanding needs
- Build relationships first
Pitfall #2: Startup and Growth: Don’t Have Resources

Actions:

• Explore alternative funding
• Strategically re-position staff
• Think strategically
• Prioritize

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Pitfall #3: Maintaining Success: Isolation

Actions:

- Create opportunities for collaboration:
  - Among embedded librarians;
  - Between embedded and centralized librarians
Pitfall #4: Maintaining Success: Burnout

**Actions:**

- Create interest groups and other backup mechanisms
- Level out the peaks and valleys
Pitfall #5: Maintaining Success: Parochialism

Actions:

• Create a forum to aggregate team-level inputs and achieve enterprise perspective
• Maintain contact between library management and information user group management
Pitfall #6: Maintaining Success: Settling for “Good Enough”

Actions:

• Review the model
• Ask hard questions
• Do you really have the relationship, shared goals, and collaboration that are necessary?

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Pitfall #7: 
Maintaining Success: Librarian “Walks on Water”

Actions:

• Succession planning and staff development
• Interest groups and other mechanisms enable junior staff to develop expertise and credibility
Pitfall #8: Maintaining Success: The Evaluation Gap

Actions:

• Library manager and user group manager share and discuss evaluation
• Follow organizational practices
Pitfalls in Review

- Can’t Get Traction
- Don’t Have Resources
- Isolation
- Burnout
- Parochialism
- Settling for “Good Enough”
- Librarian “Walks on Water”
- The Evaluation Gap
For More Information...

Blog: http://www.embeddedlibrarian.com

Book:
Thank you!

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