

## **A Peer Teaching Program in Coronavirus Times**

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As a graduate student at IUPUI, I was aware of how blessed I was to be able to be working at an academic library such as University Library while completing my Master's of Library Science and Information degree. As one who is interested in teaching and information literacy, I counted myself even luckier when I was presented with the opportunity to take part in a peer teaching program at UL. This program has continued to provide me with new learning and knowledge opportunities, experience within higher education classrooms, perspective on embedding librarians into curriculum, and networking opportunities with library and university professors and faculty.

At the beginning of the program in August of 2019, I was excited to complete the teaching curriculum that was designed and led by librarians that were routinely in classrooms. As a library science student with an academic specialization, I was familiar with the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy that each of the six modules of the curriculum were created around. The expertise and experience that each of the instructing librarians brought to this curriculum was invaluable. I was provided a front row seat to how librarians practically used guiding standards like the ACRL framework in their daily work; while these standards had been emphasized and taught in repetition throughout my library science coursework, this program truly brought direct application to the theoretical knowledge gained in the classroom. My continued library science coursework, particularly an information instruction course, provided me with context again and again as I saw what I was being taught in my classrooms be implemented by professionals working in libraries and higher education. The various readings and exercises throughout the coursework, combined with opportunities to observe and aid librarians in classrooms presented myself and the other peer teachers with a rich learning environment with a clear focus.

As my cohort and I finished the teaching curriculum and moved into the spring semester, the goal was to begin integrating ourselves into classrooms. I had a few opportunities to teach alongside other librarians in various information literacy settings. Oftentimes this took the form of working with a class on a specific assignment or project that a faculty member had requested a librarians input on. By March as the effects of the coronavirus began taking a toll on universities, it was clear that our opportunities to be in physical classrooms would become less and less. But being a firsthand witness to the way educators and librarians have continued teaching in the midst of uncertainty and quickly changing environments has been no less educational. I have seen University Library staff and faculty transition to virtual methods of instruction and information literacy with grace and wisdom. I have watched as they have struggled to continue providing seamless access to resources for students, some

of which are grappling with a learning environment foreign to them. Continuing to provide the reference help that I could, where and when I could as student staff, has been a challenge to say the least. Without a physical reference desk, classroom, or library building to be in, my job responsibilities took a turn that allowed me to appreciate anew the broad values that libraries subscribe to, such as open access efforts, discussion surrounding digital versus physical resources, and customer service philosophies.

I took on this peer teaching program with a goal of building skills and experience in the area of classroom instruction. I was richly rewarded by the curriculum that was designed for peer teachers to better understand and prepare for a librarian's role in higher education classrooms. Though my opportunities to flex those skills were cut short, I still consider this service opportunity to be a highly effective learning experience as a library science student, and I encourage others to grab similar opportunities with both hands.