Chapter 13

California State University, Dominguez Hills

Revitalizing a Program from the Ground Up

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Population Served

California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH), is a regional public university located in the South Bay of Los Angeles County. It is one of the twenty-three campuses within the California State University system. In spring 2018, CSUDH had a total enrollment of 14,635 students and a full-time equivalent of 11,325 students. CSUDH offers forty-four undergraduate degrees, twenty-two graduate degrees, and several postgraduate certificates. Popular degree programs are in business administration, psychology, criminal justice, sociology, and health science.¹ Over half of our students are the first in their families to attend college, and many work full-time, transfer from community colleges, and live in LA County.² We are a designated Hispanic-Serving Institution, with 61.9 percent of the student population identifying as Hispanic/Latino, 14.1 percent as Black/African American, 11.1 percent Asian, and 9.5 percent White/Caucasian.³ Originally founded in 1960, CSUDH received its permanent home in Carson as a response to the Watts Rebellion of 1965.⁴ The governor selected Carson in response to the lack of educational opportunities for the region and demands from African Americans in the rebellion advocating for access to higher education.⁵ Historically, CSUDH has been economically disadvantaged, receiving less state funding than other campuses. Among other disparities, this has resulted in

the lowest tenure density (28%) within the CSU system and over half of the classes offered in temporary buildings well past their intended years of use.⁶

This history directly shapes the culture of CSUDH, which we see as an institution passionately committed to social justice, though at times we are resigned to under-resourced conditions. As a direct result of this institutional culture, the information literacy program is actively committed to social justice in its pedagogy. We also have to market the program as necessary to instructors who are already overextended. Despite information literacy being an institutional learning outcome,⁷ faculty may perceive it as a superfluous task when working with students who have basic unmet needs (food, housing, etc.) on an under-resourced campus.

Program Scope

The information literacy (IL) program is made up of several components: in-person course-integrated instruction, assignment design, online learning, stand-alone workshops, and a credit-bearing course (to be implemented in the spring 2020 semester). In combination, each component should ideally contribute to a well-rounded information literacy program where students have multiple information literacy touch points throughout their time at CSUDH. In practice, some students receive much more attention than others, and we are still working on finessing the program's reach.

As a result of attrition and hiring freezes during the 2008 recession, the CSUDH library was extremely short-staffed when I (Carolyn) arrived as IL coordinator in 2016. The IL program was dormant, and few classes were taught. The program had to be entirely rebuilt, including a web presence, request form, policies, learning outcomes, assessment plan, and establishing a reputation on campus. Because we were building a program from the ground up, we were not as tied to legacy one-shots and relationships as other programs may be. In consultation with our associate dean, the IL coordinator brainstormed what an ideal program would look like without these long-standing relationships, and agreed there would be a greater emphasis on assignment and curricular design not tied to an in-person one-shot for sustainability reasons. Assignment design is featured prominently on our IL program website via handouts designed by the IL coordinator on designing effective research assignments and alternatives to the research paper genre (see figure 13.1).

Since 2017, CSUDH librarians have engaged in twenty significant assignment design consultations resulting in everything from the revision of course learning outcomes to the adoption of scaffolded research assignments designed by librarians. We see this as a great accomplishment considering that a majority of our library faculty have been with the institution for fewer than three years. As relationships with instructional faculty grow, we have been invited to the table at the start of some entirely new degree programs and courses that are moving online or undergoing curriculum review.

In reviving the program, we focused our initial attention on upper-division course-integrated one-shots. These courses are typically taught by permanent faculty, and we anticipated this would cut down on the typical churn in one-shot relationships as we attempted to reestablish a presence on campus. Upper-division course-integrated information literacy instruction is typically provided upon request from the course instructor through either a web form or personal contact with their liaison librarian. As of fall 2018, over 60 percent of our one-shot instruction sessions are for upper-division or graduate courses.

Information Literacy Program

The library's information literacy program supports the teaching and learning mission of CSUDH. We focus on integrating information literacy throughout the academic curriculum and contributing to students' life long learning through teaching and instructional support.

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Collaborations

Classroom Instruction

Collaborate with one of our librarians to teach information literacy concepts and research skills. We'll design a customized class session for your class and/or assignment(s) and host you in our library instruction computer classrooms.

[Request an Instruction Session](#)
[Policies](#)

Assignment Design

Librarians can consult with you on building information literacy concepts throughout your curriculum, the design of research assignments, and recommend additional instructional materials. Please contact [Carolyn Caffrey Gardner](#), Information Literacy Coordinator, or your [liaison librarian](#).

[Alternative Research Assignments](#)
[Writing Across the Curriculum](#)

Online Learning

We offer a self-paced mobile tour, interactive tutorials, and research guides to build information literacy skills and support your teaching outside of a face-to-face classroom environment. Please contact [Tessa Withorn](#), Online Learning Librarian, or your [liaison librarian](#), for questions and ideas for integrating online learning into your course.

[Tutorials](#)
[Getting Started](#)
[Subject Guides](#)

Figure 13.1

Information literacy program website with assignment design featured

Our only systematic information literacy instruction for undergraduates in general education coursework takes place in the summer for early-start English composition courses. These composition courses reach more than half of incoming freshmen.⁸ In the coming years we hope to engage intentionally with the general education curriculum now that our reputation as information literacy experts is established.

The library offers a handful of stand-alone workshops each semester that are often linked to other programming within the library or with campus partners. For example, the library participates in a student affairs workshops series where students select from several workshops on academic success and receive a certification of completion. Our reference services coordinator has offered several workshops in this series focused on becoming a Google pro with filetype and site searching. Other workshops have been part of our Open Access Week celebrations and centered on editing Wikipedia or finding open access resources after graduation.

Digital learning objects (DLOs) are integrated into the library's website through a Getting Started with Library Research guide and Tutorials page,⁹ as well as frequently asked questions and research guides where needed. We use DLOs as stand-alone, self-paced resources, but also as a way to extend a one-shot session by either preparing students for an in-person library session as a pre-assignment, or as a follow-up to concepts that were not fully addressed in the session. As of fall 2019, we have piloted three course-integrated tutorials using Springshare's LibWizard platform. This approach mirrors our upper-division in-person instruction in an attempt to provide a more holistic online learning experience that connects DLOs to a specific assignment (e.g., citation tracking for a literature review) or disciplinary resources (e.g., primary research, evidence-based practice). As more courses move to fully online or hybrid modalities, we anticipate partnering with instructors to adapt what was once an in-person session into a course-integrated tutorial, making stand-alone, self-paced tutorials readily accessible to students, and consulting with instructors on assignment and module design.

Finally, in spring 2020, the CSUDH Library will be launching a three-credit course, Fundamentals of Information Literacy. Once offered, the course will reach approximately thirty students each semester and meet a general education requirement in the category of lifelong learning. The course was developed by library faculty in order to create a space for librarians to have deep learning opportunities with students and to focus on concepts that can be a challenge for one-shot instruction to address. Specifically, the course will dive into how we evaluate information including the role algorithmic biases and cognitive biases play and contemporary information issues such as privacy and commercial content moderation.

Operations

All librarians are part of the Reference, Instruction, and Outreach Services department (RIOS), including the IL coordinator. As of the time of this writing, there are eight tenured or tenure-track faculty librarians who participate in the IL program who have both a functional role (i.e., information literacy coordinator, collections coordinator, reference coordinator, user services) and subject liaison responsibilities. We also have two temporary positions dedicated to reference and instruction. The IL coordinator assesses the program, communicates with librarians about their teaching, provides instruction professional development, advocates for IL on campus-wide committees, communicates with faculty, and schedules our instruction rooms. The online learning librarian is primarily responsible for creating and marketing tutorials, but collaborates with the IL coordinator and other librarians on creating DLOs for specific courses in their liaison area and for a general audience.

Instruction requests within a liaison area are assigned to the designated librarian when available, but in an effort to keep one-shot instruction equitable, the IL coordinator assigns general education (GE) instruction based on current instructional load. Since the temporary lecturer positions have different responsibilities from the tenure-track librarians, they have been teaching the bulk of GE instruction sessions, but when they are unavailable the request moves on to the librarian with the fewest sessions scheduled. In 2016, I (Carolyn) called a meeting with all librarians, and we discussed how we would distribute classes equitably. This was a productive strategy for having all librarians feel invested in

our instruction program and not dismissing GE sessions as an extra burden or unimportant. The IL coordinator tries to not schedule anyone for more than three sessions in one day, with three being the exception rather than an expected number, in order to set boundaries and expectations with course instructors. It can be a challenge to enforce a sustainable workload with our faculty partners when many of them are lecturer faculty themselves who often teach five or more sessions in one day at CSUDH and also teach at other college campuses in the region. We strive to balance our own needs with the expectations of faculty who may themselves be teaching five 75-minute classes back-to-back. For instructors teaching multiple sections, the request is typically shared by two librarians who design the lesson plan together and then divide up the sections as evenly as possible. Distributing our work this way also leads to an increase in lesson plan sharing and collaborative teaching experiences for librarians.

While the IL program does not have its own dedicated budget, library administration is very supportive of the IL program's financial needs. For example, librarians have received funding to attend ACRL's Immersion Program, to purchase requested software such as Articulate Storyline and LibWizard, and to update equipment in library classrooms. Library administration also supports the IL program in other meaningful ways. Our library dean is a former IL coordinator and therefore centers the teaching work we do in the library's mission and strategic goals as well as campus-wide conversations with which she is involved.¹⁰

Marketing

Because we are a department of librarians who are relatively new to the institution, forming relationships and mutual respect with course instructors is essential to the maturation of our IL program. At the beginning of each semester, liaison librarians send newsletters and emails to their colleges and departments. For example, the sociology liaison librarian emails all of the faculty teaching the research methods course with a sample lesson plan and an explanation of how this course is a key place to teach information literacy concepts required of all sociology majors. This approach helps the liaison teach multiple sections of the same course rather than just those that may have sought out instruction. Assignment design and online learning opportunities usually spring from conversations between liaison librarians and instructors while preparing for a one-shot or discussing the needs of courses undergoing modification.

Many of our librarians are also invited to department meetings and use this time as an opportunity to highlight current collaborations and start a conversation around curricular needs, rather than just present on what the library can do for individual students and instructors. While we are actively engaging in promotional conversations about the IL program, we are not seeking additional one-shot instruction sessions for the sake of increasing their quantity. We are now trying to engage faculty in conversations about strategic places where we can partner in the curriculum. The campus-wide committees librarians serve on are essential for being thought of as institutional partners. For example, our librarians have served on committees that have allowed them to position the library as expert collaborators in assessment for program review and accreditation.

While relationship building and personal connections have been the most effective way to meaningfully engage instructional faculty, we also use our web presence to reinforce how

integral information literacy is to the institution. In a recent redesign of the IL program page, we created buttons to encourage users to explore and act (e.g., request instruction, modify assignment language, browse tutorials) rather than scan information and created graphics to show how learning outcomes are built from a foundation of orientation to GE to disciplinary concepts in the major (see figure 13.1).¹¹ By using language like “partner,” “collaborate,” and “outcomes” in person and online, we market ourselves as an academic program rather than a service.

Collaboration

Our strongest instructional collaborations have been with individual programs and colleges through the liaison model; however, we also have significant partnerships with our Faculty Development Center (FDC), our Supplemental Instruction program, and the Toro Learning and Testing Center (TLTC). The FDC regularly asks us to contribute professional development workshops on designing effective research assignments and teaching students how to evaluate information, which are well attended. The conversations we are able to have in these environments promote a shared understanding of information literacy with faculty. The IL program has an active role in the early-start Summer Bridge program where many of our first-year students come to campus for a week before their first fall semester to take English composition and math courses for credit. We provide one-shot instruction for all summer early-start composition courses, which include supplemental instructors (SIs). SIs are undergraduate and graduate peer educators employed by the English department who are embedded into introductory courses and lead their own workshops in addition to tutoring. We also participate in ongoing training for English SIs and in their annual professional development conference. For example, we were recently asked to present on plagiarism. We interpreted that request through our learning outcomes and chose to focus on how SIs can effectively teach the why behind citation, ways to discuss plagiarism with students that are not punitive, and a vigorous debate on the ethics of Turnitin.com.¹² The SIs who participated in the session responded positively in a feedback form and in personal conversations to being addressed as fellow educators and found the tools we provided useful for their own instruction. This approach has been especially effective in moving our instructional load away from dozens of one-shot sessions while still reaching undergraduate students in first-year writing courses through assignment design and consultations.

Historically, the CSUDH library has tended to seek collaboration primarily to forward our own goals of increased utilization of our resources, but now, we are actively seeking to equalize one-sided relationships by offering support and communicating shared goals. Relationship building with other campus partners with similar educational missions can initially require compromise, setting boundaries, and establishing trust. For example, we were approached by TLTC to collaborate on a drop-in workshop series for students writing research papers after TLTC had already developed IL content for evaluating sources. Instead of micromanaging the ways TLTC would teach these concepts, we decided not to overly critique its approach with how we would address the same subjects. For example, TLTC wanted to use a web evaluation checklist that would not be a typical element of our teaching practice. In order to create a sustainable partnership, we had to compromise and aim for a shared understanding of IL. Over time, our approaches to teaching

have grown closer together through mutual respect and focusing on our shared goal for student learning, which might not have happened if we had focused our energy on TLTC's content.

Assessment

We assess information literacy in multiple ways both within class sessions and programmatically. After each one-shot session, library faculty ask students to take a brief survey that measures satisfaction and perceptions about library instruction. This kind of “perceived teaching” evaluation is required for all faculty in our retention, tenure, and promotion process, serving a perfunctory role even if we don’t gather meaningful information on student learning from them. However, we have used the student comments to advocate for additional time and resources, such as lobbying library administration to provide funds to update slow computers or asking instructors for the entire class period to be devoted to IL instruction. Library faculty also typically use active learning strategies in their classrooms that include formative classroom assessment techniques built in such as interactive polling (Kahoot!), digital worksheets, one-minute papers, gallery walks, and discussion. Library faculty individually make use of the assessment data from classroom activities to reflect on and modify their pedagogy. In a previous academic year the IL coordinator asked each librarian to respond to the question “How have you used formative assessment to modify your instruction?” and included the answers in a year-end report.

Currently, the campus assessment committee’s charge is limited to degree-granting programs. However, the library has submitted an annual IL report in the assessment management software, Campus Labs Planning, in order to take part in ongoing campus conversations on learning outcomes. While assessment is not mandated for the library, we do see the value of programmatic assessment for continuous improvement. To achieve that goal, we’ve partnered with other instructional faculty to assist in programmatically assessing information literacy student learning outcomes in their degree programs. Our biggest collaborations to date have been with biology and psychology senior capstone courses to assess mastery of programmatic learning goals. Approximately 100 to 250 students are in the psychology course with varying instructors each semester. Together as a department and with the psychology faculty, we created a rubric to score final research papers that was inspired by the Claremont Colleges’ Information Literacy in Student Work rubric.¹³ After several norming sessions, two librarians scored each final student paper in the areas of attribution, sources selected, and source integration. Based on assessment of student work over several semesters, the library successfully recommended changes to the curriculum of this course and the sequencing of information literacy across the psychology major, creating an online tool kit comprising assignment design recommendations developed by librarians for psychology instructors.¹⁴ Both biology and psychology include IL as part of their annual assessment for their mandated reports. Lastly, our IL coordinator compiled data on institutional learning outcomes linked to information literacy to contribute evidence of information literacy assessment for a recent campus-wide reaccreditation through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC).¹⁵ Our library dean also led the committee that looked at the WASC core competency for information literacy.

Pedagogical Highlights

Our liaison and instruction librarians are dedicated to student engagement and embrace IL concepts from the Association of College and Research Libraries' *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*.¹⁶ Individual librarians have full control over what and how they teach, but we have a culture of sharing materials that contributes to how we create a community of practice. A shared Google Drive with previous lesson plans and materials has helped us set a consistent tone with faculty and learn from each other, especially considering the lack of institutional memory and a shuffle of liaison responsibilities. Lesson plan documents typically include learning outcomes, a bit of background about the course and communication with the instructor, and a general outline of content and activities. We share slides, handouts, and materials collected from instructors such as assignments and syllabi that often go unchanged. Our drive is organized in nested folders by course, instructor, and semester to make it easier to trace the history of what has been taught for the curriculum. Several of our librarians have contributed to and adapted activities from shared repositories and instruction handbooks, and we rely on shared materials in the profession to generate and inspire new ideas. We continue to foster this community through informal conversations and feedback and occasional co-teaching. The IL coordinator typically leads a more formal professional development workshop once a semester on topics ranging from curriculum mapping to communicating goals with faculty.

A representative example of how we try to infuse a one-shot session with curricular needs, collaboration with instructors, and active learning would be a seventy-five-minute session with an upper-division course in a major. In this scenario, the health sciences librarian met with the faculty member at the beginning of the semester to discuss the syllabus and outcomes. One of the sessions that came out of that meeting focused on a core disciplinary framework, evidence-based health-care management (EBM), in which students would be able to formulate a PICO research question, use subject headings in PubMed, and analyze the methodology of a research study, with an enduring understanding that EBM is an iterative and systematic process for decision-making.¹⁷ As a result of consulting with the instructor, the librarian was able to call back to their textbook and course readings and draw connection between the course outcomes, IL outcomes, and assignment with students throughout the session. Activities included think-pair-shares about students' previous experience with research and specific prompts related to the readings, a highlighter activity to identify methodologies on printed articles with varying levels of evidence, and guided searching. While this level of course integration is not always possible, we strive to increase communication and transparency with faculty through sharing lesson plans in advance and provide learning experiences for students that allow them to actively participate.

Our instruction request form asks, "What would you like students to learn from the session?" but we do get some instruction requests for students to "learn about the library," or requests with no clear indication that students will be preparing for a specific research assignment. We try to use those requests as an opportunity to discuss concepts from the ACRL *Framework* that we wouldn't have time for during a session. For example, we received a request for an English composition courses taught by an instructor we partner with regularly who is enthusiastic about the library, but requires only a few scholarly

sources and doesn't stipulate that we cover specific resources or concepts. For this session, one of our librarians used a concept mapping activity, the Information Spectrum, that addresses "Information Creation as a Process" to talk about evaluating source formats and discuss how information is created, accessed, and shared.¹⁸

In terms of pedagogical approaches for online learning and tutorials, we use tools like LibWizard that allow for directions and text on the side and interactive application of concepts whenever possible. One of our tutorials, for example, focuses on tools in a database, *Opposing Viewpoints in Context*, but also allows for free responses and individual topic searching. The tutorial asks open-ended and exploratory questions that guide students through using research tools to develop IL concepts such as choosing a topic that interests them and reading source information to identify an author's expertise and their unique contribution to a conversation (see figure 13.2).

Figure 13.2
Page from the Opposing Viewpoints tutorial

While we have a public-facing IL vision statement, our internal guiding vision is "Fake it 'til you make it." This is about not reacting solely to what faculty request from their IL sessions or tutorials and pushing the content where we see it needs to go through intentional conversations with our partners. We strive to be seen as IL experts on campus by outwardly behaving as IL experts even when we don't feel like our most confident selves. We are not waiting around for someone to ask for an IL session on, say, the intersections of scholarly communication and information literacy, but instead proactively seek opportunities in the sessions we do have to show faculty the greater possibilities. As our program has developed, we have found that these interactions do shift the conversations we have with faculty. For example, what started as a request for a library tour has shifted into a librarian-designed nongraded assignment with meaningful information literacy concepts integrated in the course. If we had been content to offer the tour that was requested, we have no doubt that is what we would still be providing for that class.

Administrative Highlights

One administrative highlight of our IL program is the way we gather and report statistics about our instructional activities. Because we hope to further our instructional reach beyond one-shots, we've also begun collecting statistics demonstrating our work and impact outside of the one-shot environment. Specifically, we record in Springshare's LibInsight anytime a librarian collaborates on or creates an ungraded assignment, graded assignment, or other supplemental instructional materials for a course.¹⁹ While these may not be the numbers formally collected by ACRL's "Academic Library Trends and Statistics Survey,"²⁰ we have made a decision to gather evidence that supports what we value. These statistics are reported out to the rest of the library in a visually engaging infographic-style report each semester.²¹

Information Literacy Coordinator Profile

I (Carolyn) applied to CSUDH because it was advertising for a formal information literacy coordinator position that would not supervise any librarians and would also have subject liaison responsibilities. It can be hard to assign percentages to the work that I do, but in a typical week of the semester I probably spend about 10 percent to 20 percent of my time involved with some aspect of coordinating our program. There are certainly some weeks where it feels like I spend no time doing coordinator work and periods in the summer where I can spend nearly 100 percent of my time planning program development. I don't teach significantly more than any other liaison librarian because I'm a coordinator; however, I may teach more one-shots than some of my colleagues by the nature of my liaison assignment. Our library administration understands that being a coordinator does not necessarily mean teaching all of the one-shot sessions that come in last minute or others don't want to teach (like our 7:00 a.m. classes!), so I do not feel additional pressure to pick up more than my fair share. I see it as my responsibility to spend more of my time on assignment design and IL assessment than other librarians.

What We Wish People Knew

One of the best things I (Carolyn) have done to help manage my administrative workload is to save all the emails I've written that help set appropriate boundaries and expectations with our teaching faculty. I paste them in a Google Doc so that I'm able to quickly find and retrieve effective language that explains tactfully why we don't offer scavenger hunts or database demonstrations. Having language readily available based on past experiences helps ensure that I'm able to respond to faculty quicker and can share some of the tips I've found over the years in negotiating with faculty and my colleagues.

I wish more people knew that the most important parts of your job as an IL coordinator are completely hidden from others. As a coordinator, it is your responsibility to set the tone and expectations within your program, and often this relational work isn't seen as "real work." While it may seem like I'm just chatting with my colleagues, I'm actually

purposely working to establish rapport and engage in informal conversations about teaching. Likewise, I have encountered an expectation for me as coordinator to divulge all my knowledge of every university program and its intersection with information literacy. These requests often feel dismissive of this kind of information gathering as not a formal part of my coordinator role. I have fielded comments that imply this is busybody work and yet they would like me to spend significant time reteaching others what I have learned. I view my responsibilities in this position to be our resident expert in the library on the curriculum of the institution. For example, I spend time reading the catalog, following the curriculum announcements on campus, and keeping an eye out for information on campus in part so that not every individual instruction librarian has to. This type of work may not be valued by colleagues or the library as a whole, but without it I would not be able to effectively do my job. At the end of the day, a successful IL program doesn't happen by chance or luck but instead through hard and often invisible work.

Notes

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