Embedded Librarian Service — Is it the Right Choice for Your Course?

• *Is it a Distance Ed online course?*  **Probably.**
  - Many of these students cannot come to the library in person or reach us at convenient hours.
  - Their research skills may be rusty if they have been out of school for several years.
  - An embedded librarian can push information out to the students as they see problems arise, at the time and place of need. It also reinforces the students’ sense of connectedness to the university.

• *If you have a mandatory research assignment, is it a very large class where it is difficult for you to give individual students attention?*  **Probably.**
  - In large classes, some students are hesitant to ask questions, or have trouble reaching you during office hours.
  - An embedded librarian can answer student questions about the mechanics or researching in the library’s databases, and again push out information at the time and place of need as they see problems arise.

• *Is it a writing emphasis course?*  **Maybe.**
  - This depends on the nature and complexity of the assignment.
  - If you are asking for an opinion piece on course readings, then no.
  - Are you asking them to research about the pros and cons of a topic? Then probably yes.

• *Is it a lower level course or an upper level course with a research assignment?*  **Probably.**
  - Students in lower level courses may not all have the same research skill level coming into the course.
  - Students may be unfamiliar with the expectations for researching at the college level.
  - Upper level students may have basic research skills, but now need assistance with more sophisticated research strategies as their assignments increase in complexity.
  - Students tend to underestimate their research skills, and confuse technological competence with information literacy.
• **Is it a lower level course where there is a mandatory research assignment requiring materials outside of course provided readings?**  **Probably.**
  o Students often come into the course with varying levels of research skills
  o If it is the first time students need to use the library’s collections, they are unfamiliar with the organization and mechanics of researching in our collections.
  o Having an embedded librarian available at the time and place of need helps students concentrate on the content and learning objectives for your assignment rather than spending time figuring out how to navigate the information landscape.

• **Is it a fairly straightforward assignment in sync with research skills the students probably have?**  **Probably not.**
  o Consider instead having library staff create a course guide and include its link in your course.

• **Is one of your goals increasing your students’ information literacy skills?**  **Probably.**
  o Library staff can work with you on designing assignments that meet the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education.

• **Is it an upper level course with a more complex research assignment using advanced research skills?**  **Probably.**
  o Students usually have mastered basic research skills, but are unaware of strategies and techniques for more focused searching.
  o Having an embedded librarian who can guide them often saves time and can improve the quality of their research.

• **Do you want a librarian in your course “just because” you might need one?**  **Probably not.**
  o We can easily provide you with a link and short posting to add to your course so students can contact us for assistance.