

**An Examination of Embedded Librarian Ideas and Practices:  
A Critical Bibliography**

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**Abstract**

Although this annotated bibliography is primarily targeted to library science professionals in an academic setting, the literature examined can very easily support secondary and college level general education teaching initiatives. The majority of the literature examined in the list comes from journal articles. The author focused primarily on actual case studies that take place in an undergraduate academic setting. Attention was paid to community colleges and schools where there are students in need of remediation. The author was also interested in seeking out literature that addressed the needs of student academic success after an embedded program was implemented. Non-traditional embedded endeavors were especially of interest; programs where academic librarians embedded themselves with high schools to support college preparation and readiness were also desired. The author highlights articles that support student success, remediation, and collaborative partnerships with subject faculty that are ongoing.

**Keywords:** embedded librarians, outreach, curriculum support, undergraduate education, information literacy, pedagogy

## **Introduction**

What follows is an annotated bibliography that explores a multitude of ways in which embedded librarianship can be implemented. In selecting the articles for this list, I used the following keywords in combination with one another or singularly: academic librarians, best practices, collaboration, embedded librarians; information literacy, instruction, outreach, and team teaching. The databases utilized to generate the results for the selected titles are all compiled by EBSCO Host and include the following: Academic Search Complete, Education Source, ERIC (Education Resource Information Center), Library & Information Science Source, MAS Ultra - School Edition, MasterFILE Premier, and Teacher Reference Center. The articles for the list are published in the following journals: *Collaborative Librarianship*, *College & Research Libraries*, *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, *Communications In Information Literacy*, *Community & Junior College Libraries*, *Education Libraries*, *Journal Of Library Administration*, *Journal Of Educational Media & Library Sciences*, *Journal Of Information Literacy*, *Journal Of Library Administration*, *Journal Of Political Science Education*, *Library & Information Science Source*, *Notes*, *Public Services Quarterly*, *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, *Resource Sharing & Information Networks*, and *Urban Library Journal*.

The terms *embedded librarian* or *embedded librarianship* can have multiple meanings which can be for a variety of reasons. As indicated in much of the current literature that addresses this subject; there is no one rule that defines how embedded librarianship is implemented. For example, a librarian can embed themselves in any number of academic programs or departments on a college campus, each with its own

mission, goals, and objectives; the way in which the librarian enhances the program can be just as individualized as the program itself. The same concept of embedding holds true for the traditional model, where the librarian collaborates with a subject faculty member in a team-teaching endeavor; the pedagogical goals for that faculty member can be completely different from another instructor who teaches the same course. Ideally, academic librarians who wish to embed themselves will have similar objectives, the most prominent will be to infuse information literacy into the curriculum which can involve: partnering with subject faculty, developing an ongoing relationship with a student or group of students to deliver individualized instruction, or participating in committee work to influence the school's administration to support library embedding initiatives.

There has been, and continues to be, a tremendous amount of literature published addressing library/faculty partnerships. As new academic librarians enter the profession, they are realizing the importance of making strong connections with the school's teaching faculty. They understand that we (academic librarians) are teaching professionals and that our role as academic librarians sometimes means doing radical outreach. Much of the current literature indicates that we have to do a great deal more to prove that libraries are needed. Many non-library administrators have this belief that because so much information is being disseminated electronically, there is no longer a need for the traditional brick and mortar space.

For academic librarians it has meant redefining our professional roles. The idea of librarians having to become experts in another discipline for the purposes of supporting the curriculum is not new; what's new is the idea that academic librarians are increasingly being held accountable for the academic success of students. For years we

(librarians) have been the stewards of information literacy and we have done a tremendous amount of work demonstrating the importance of including IL as part of general education learning outcomes; but now we are being asked to develop information literacy lessons that are discipline specific. The best way for this to happen is to become teaching partners with the faculty we are liaison with. It is no longer acceptable to “just be the librarian”; in addition to all of the traditional roles: collection development, cataloging, facilitating one-shot IL instruction classes, reference work, maintaining special collections, and other duties; we now have to work at developing pedagogical strategies that speak to the needs of diverse learners, similar to what many of our subject based colleagues do on a regular basis. Emerging educational technology continues to emerge, which requires us to stay abreast of the new and improved ways of implementing IL instruction. There was a time when academic librarians, for the most part, didn’t concern themselves with pedagogy and effective teaching styles, but if we want to embed ourselves with the subject based faculty, we have to be open to modifying the way in which we teach students; especially students who learn and interpret information in unique ways. Outreach strategies for academic librarians can be as creative and varied as the number of students on a college campus.

There will never be one golden rule when it comes to way in which a librarian networks with faculty on campus. So much of the literature indicates that many successful embedded librarian programs are established through informal encounters; something as simple as word of mouth from the students can grow into a permanently established, administration approved library collaborative. The styles and methods of the assessment of library and faculty partnerships are also varied throughout much of the

literature. With so many librarians jumping on the embedded bandwagon, there has been much discussion on how we can develop ways to determine what would be considered a “successful” library embedded program. One common activity that many academic librarians are using to determine this is the development of surveys. The data gathered from these surveys can help librarians with developing outreach and marketing strategies, the evaluation of teaching effectiveness, implementing programs that support student centeredness, and how libraries impact important administrative decisions. Academic library outreach to non-academic entities that can support information literacy and learning is another way librarians are keeping themselves relevant while at the same time helping students prepare for the critical thinking needed for the world of work.

**Bean, T., & Thomas, S. (2010). Being like both: Library instruction methods that outshine the one-shot. *Public Services Quarterly*, 6(2/3), 237-249.**

With one-shot library orientation classes, time is of the essence; after facilitating one-shot orientation classes for a period of time, you learn how to utilize the time efficiently. The authors of this article present readers with methods for improving information literacy instruction in one shot sessions. Some of the methods used include analysis of feedback from students who experienced embedded library instruction, developing strong, lines of communication with faculty, and implementing a variety of instruction tools that speak to the multiple learning styles of the students they serve.

**Bobish, G. (2011). Participation and pedagogy: Connecting the social web to ACRL learning outcomes. *Journal Of Academic Librarianship*, 37(1), 54-63.**

The article offers academic librarians' perspective on using Web 2.0 to enhance pedagogy; Association for College & Research Libraries (ACRL) learning outcomes are addressed. The authors assert that Web 2.0 should be a mainstay in teaching information literacy skills because it supports student learning and student engagement. Using Web 2.0 as a means of instruction will keep academic librarians abreast of emerging educational technology.

**Carlito, M. (2009). Urban academic library outreach to secondary school students and teachers. *Urban Library Journal*, 15(2), 1-10.**

This article provides an example of how a university library collaborates with a secondary high school near their campus and uses the partnership as a means to infuse information literacy into a high school curriculum while at the same time preparing secondary students for college level work. The authors assert that reaching out to

secondary schools encourages students to develop the research skills they will need before they enter college (Carlito, 2009).

**Cahoy, E., & Schroeder, R. (2012). Embedding affective learning outcomes in library instruction. *Communications In Information Literacy*, 6(1), 73-90.**

Offering readers an interesting view on librarian pedagogy; the authors of this article present models for embedding effective learning outcomes within information literacy instruction, and provides strategies to help librarians discover, articulate, and address students' self-efficacy, motivation, emotions and attitudes. The authors refer to Constance Mellon, a librarian best known for her published work on Library Anxiety. The authors assert that a student's library anxiety can impact how well they master the research process. Examples of how to assess student learning outcomes in information literacy instruction are presented.

**Cha, T., & Hsieh, P. (2009). A case study of faculty attitudes toward collaboration with librarians to integrate information literacy into the curriculum. (Chinese). *Journal Of Educational Media & Library Sciences*, 46(4), 441-467.**

In what could be referenced as an assessment guide for academic librarians, this article presents a case study that was conducted to gauge the attitudes of teaching faculty in regards to collaboration. A survey was administered to faculty at Feng Chia University in Taiwan to measure the teaching faculty's perception of librarians on: teaching instructor's involvement in developing students' IL competency; collaborative models that faculty preferred; faculty collaborative attitudes and the demographical variables; and factors for developing successful partnerships. The article states that "students

Learning and Librarian Professionalism from faculty provide insights that understanding pedagogy, enhancing instructional skills and continuing progress in librarian professionalism will contribute to consolidating partnerships when developing course-specific IL programs” (Tien-Yu & Pao-Nuan, 2009).

**Cosgrove, J. A. (2001). Promoting higher education: (Yet) another goal of bibliographic instruction of high school students by college librarians. *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, 8(2), 17-24.**

In the interest of preparing high school students for college level research before they enter college, the authors of this article discuss the benefits of academic librarians collaborating with high school librarians to developing information literacy lessons that include college preparation as part of the curriculum. The authors also assert that librarians are in a unique position to act as a recruiter for the college; in many instances, they will encounter high school students visiting the library on college tours with their teachers.

**Covone, N., & Lamm, M. (2010). Just be there: Campus, department, classroom...and kitchen? *Public Services Quarterly*, 6(2/3), 198-207.**

The authors of this article assert that academic librarians must be willing to meet students where they are. The authors stress that “embracing a proactive approach to library service is necessary in order to be successful and relevant in the academic environment” (Covone & Lamm, 2010). The article presents readers with an example of how one academic librarian broke the “stereotypical” mold of traditional librarianship by creating an outreach program that goes beyond the walls of the campus library.

**Dewey, B. (2004). The embedded librarian: Strategic campus collaborations. *Resource Sharing & Information Networks*, 17(1/2), 5-17.**

In Barbara Dewey's article "The Embedded Librarian: Strategic Campus Collaborations," she explains why collaboration is important for both the library and the campus in which it serves: "Librarians play a central role in advancing colleges' and universities' strategic priorities through constant collaboration" (Dewey, 2004). Dewey offers readers her input on the concept of collaboration, as she defines (or redefines) the purpose of library/campus collaborations. Divided into several sections, each section of the article offers enlightening input on the justification of embedded librarianship and collaboration. The ideas presented in this article are models for all librarians who are interested in taking on an embedded project.

**Drewes, K., & Hoffman, N. (2010). Academic embedded librarianship: An introduction. *Public Services Quarterly*, 6(2/3), 75-82.**

A great deal of the current literature makes mention of the fact that embedded librarianship is not a new phenomenon, and that library/faculty collaborations have always been in existence; in doing so, the authors of these publications almost always offer some formal definition of the term. In Kathy Drewes and Nadine Hoffman's article "Academic Embedded Librarianship: An Introduction," they go a step further. The article not only defines the term, it outlines its history and evolution and how it relates to academia today, similar to an encyclopedia article and ideal for librarians who aren't familiar with this concept of service.

**Essinger, C., & Ke, I. (2013). Outreach: What works? *Collaborative Librarianship*, 5(1), 52-58.**

Librarians at the University of Houston published a report on a survey that was administered to liaison librarians to learn of the ways they carried out outreach activities. When the survey was returned, they facilitated professional development workshops based on the results of the survey; the goal was to improve librarian outreach strategies. The article presents a plethora of ideas on how to implement a library marketing plan.

**Heider, K. L. (2010). Ten tips for implementing a successful embedded librarian program. *Public Services Quarterly*, 6(2-3), 110-121.**

Librarians at Indiana University of Pennsylvania (IUP) developed an embedded librarian program with the school's College of Education and Educational Technology. The authors assert that after developing this program, the lines of communication between the library and the department have been enhanced, resulting in improved collection development, stronger library liaison initiatives, more effective team teaching partnerships, and an improvement in the quality of teaching and learning in the College of Education. Strategies for implementing their embedded program are shared.

**Hollister, C. (2008). Meeting them where they are: Library instruction for today's students in the world civilizations course. *Public Services Quarterly*, 4(1), 15-27.**

The author of this article discusses the strategies a librarian used to enhance instruction and engage students in a World Civilization course at the University of Buffalo; the benefits of developing faculty/librarian partnerships are offered. Methods used to improve students' academic performance while developing faculty-librarian

partnerships are presented. A variety of pedagogy techniques that academic librarians can utilize are shared.

**Kesselman, M. A., & Watstein, S. (2009). Creating opportunities: Embedded librarians. *Journal Of Library Administration*, 49(4), 383-400.**

This article puts emphasis on the idea of librarians reaching out to users where ever they may be on campus. The authors offer advice on what librarians can do to make themselves more attractive to their non-librarian colleagues; one way that's suggested is using course integrated instruction. It is also advised that librarians do all they can to market themselves. Some of the other strategies offered include collaborating with faculty in scholarly communication, becoming familiar with the organizational structure of the institution you work for, and staying current with all things related to embedded librarianship.

**Kobzina, N. G. (2010). A faculty-librarian partnership: A unique opportunity for course integration. *Journal Of Library Administration*, 50(4), 293-314. doi:10.1080/01930821003666965**

This article speaks to issues related to library pedagogy and differentiated instruction at the college level. Implementing a lesson on environmental studies where students are challenged to use their research and analytical skills, the librarians at the University of California at Berkeley developed a course entitled: "Introduction to Environmental Studies." The authors dedicate a tremendous amount of time reaching out to faculty, making arrangements for collaborative instruction and revising a curriculum so that it would be interdisciplinary in nature. A great deal of energy was also spent on analyzing the performance outcomes of students after the integration of information literacy instruction.

**Lange, J., Canuel, R., & Fitzgibbons, M. (2011). Tailoring information literacy instruction and library services for continuing education. *Journal Of Information Literacy*, 5(2), 66-80.**

Academic librarians in urban settings encounter diverse learners all the time, especially adult, continuing education students. Adult learners may have any number of issues related to learning and may be in need of remediation because they haven't been in school for years. Librarians will need to be prepared to create instructional tools for diverse adult learners. The authors of this article share useful teaching techniques for tailoring instruction to meet the academic needs of adult learners that have diverse learning styles.

**Leckie, G., & Fullerton, A. (1999). The roles of academic librarians in fostering a pedagogy for information literacy. *ACRL Ninth National Conference* 8-11.**

The role of the academic librarian is a subject that is in constant evolution; an observation on the dynamics of library pedagogy and what it can entail is presented. The issue of faculty not understanding the role of the academic librarian is addressed; suggestions on what librarians can do to make faculty more knowledgeable are offered. Among other ideas, the authors assert that librarians should take the time to communicate with faculty face to face and that dialogue is a valuable way to synthesize IL into the curriculum. Librarians who are interested in developing their teaching and instruction skills will find this article enlightening.

**McMillen, P., & Fabbi, J. (2010). How to be an E3 librarian. *Public Services Quarterly*, 6(2/3), 174-186.**

The authors review literature on embedded librarianship for a case study. The idea of improving an existing embedded librarian program is presented. The authors share their strategies to (further) embed themselves within the College of Education at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. They point out that they had longstanding relationships with administrative bodies and that these relationships were key to the success of improving IL instruction, collaboration and outreach. The authors assert that academic librarians should “capitalize” on embedded programs already in place and use it as a strategy to strengthen the mission of the college or university. Ideas on how to evaluate an embedded program already in place are presented.

**Manus, S. (2009). Librarian in the classroom: An embedded approach to music information literacy for first-year undergraduates. *Notes*, 66(2), 249-261.**

In what some may consider an effective strategy for developing an embedded librarian program for college freshmen, Sarah J. Beutter Manus has published an article that could easily be used as a reference for academic librarians. In her paper “Librarian in the Classroom: An Embedded Approach to Music Information Literacy for First Year Undergraduates,” Manus provides readers with scaffolds that librarians and instructors can use for teaching information literacy skills to first year students. Manus explains that the first year music students at Vanderbilt University were not acquiring the information literacy skills they needed for writing successful research papers. To resolve this issue Manus implemented a four-semester integrated music information literacy program that placed emphasis on library instruction for first-year students.

**Meyer, N. J., & Miller, I. R. (2008). The library as service-learning partner: A win-win collaboration with students and faculty. *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, 15(4), 399-413.**

In a major interdepartmental collaborative at Eastern Washington University, the authors of this article present a case study which involved students, librarians and faculty in the technical communications department. The librarians implemented a pedagogical strategy to promote *RefWorks* by allowing students to take part in their own education; while at the same time, infusing information literacy into the curriculum and establishing a permanent pedagogical relationship with their teaching counterparts.

**Niles, P. (2011). Meeting the needs of the 21st century student. *Community & Junior College Libraries*, 17(2), 47-51.**

The authors of this article present a close examination of academic library pedagogy and how it relates to the current generation of college students; specifically their learning styles. The issue of modifying our instructional methods to meet the diverse learning needs of millennial students is addressed. In what some academic librarians will consider a priority, the question of how to stay relevant to freshman and sophomore students is posed.

**Oakleaf, M., & VanScoy, A. (2010). Instructional strategies for digital reference: Methods to facilitate student learning. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 49(4), 380-390.**

The authors of this article present teaching methods and strategies that can be applied in a digital environment. The article will be of great interest to academic librarians who are looking for ways to enhance their pedagogy skills, thus making them more marketable when seeking embedded teaching opportunities. An analysis of the

reference interview and how it can be used to promote student learning is also addressed.

The idea of using the reference interview as a teaching opportunity is explored.

**Olivares, O. (2010). The sufficiently embedded librarian: Defining and establishing productive librarian-faculty partnerships in academic libraries. *Public Services Quarterly*, 6(2/3), 140-149.**

In an attempt to explore the dynamics of embedding oneself in an environment where there is resistance to library collaboration; the author of this article presents readers with the question: “How does an academic librarian become embedded in a department or college that is reluctant to accept reference, research or instruction services from the library?” (Olivares, 2010). The article addresses an issue that unfortunately is a reality for many librarians. The difficulties of embedding ourselves in an academic program or collaborating in a team teaching venture are discussed. The experiences of an embedded librarian at Saint Cloud State University in Minnesota are shared. Valuable advice is offered to academic librarians who are facing challenges with embedding themselves.

**Rao, S., Cameron, A., & Gaskin-Noel, S. (2009). Embedding general education competencies into an online information literacy course. *Journal Of Library Administration*, 49(1/2), 59-73. doi:10.1080/01930820802310858**

In the interest of improving assessment of the general education learning outcomes in students after infusing information literacy into an online course, the librarians at Mercy College in Dobbs Ferry, New York, developed a curricular model that promotes critical thinking, critical reading, quantitative reasoning, and writing. This model not only allows for improved assessment, it can also be referenced by librarians interested in developing an IL course, tutorial, or even used as a way to align curriculums

with general education classes; a marketing strategy for librarians interested in pursuing collaborative endeavors.

**Sciammarella, S. (2009). Making a difference: Library and teaching faculty working together to develop strategies in dealing with student plagiarism. *Community & Junior College Libraries*, 15(1), 23-34.**

If there is one thing subject faculty and librarians are willing to work on collaboratively, it's teaching students how to avoid plagiarism at all cost. In the spirit of working as a community of educators who share a common goal, the author of this article brings to light the seriousness of not addressing the issue of student plagiarism as a collective effort. The article offers academic librarians hope in the notion that we are not alone in the battle to eliminate plagiarism among students. In what could be an opportunity to establish embedded teaching partnerships between subject faculty and librarians, the author asserts that "students, faculty and librarians should work together to shoulder this responsibility and reduce plagiarism" (Sciammarella, 2009).

**Smalley, T. N. (2004). College success: High school librarians make the difference. *Journal Of Academic Librarianship*, 30(3), 193-198.**

In a study that looked at the academic performance of college freshmen who graduated from high schools that had librarians versus the performance of students who came from schools without librarians; it was discovered that, overall, students were better prepared for the college experience when a librarian/school media specialist was part of the secondary education curriculum. The author of this article asserts: "...students whose high schools include librarians and library instruction programs bring more understanding about information research to their college experiences" (Smalley, 2004). Although not

very popular among most academic librarians, a substantial amount of the current literature speaks to the subject of academic librarians embedding themselves in secondary environments that don't have school media specialist; with the overall intent of preparing high school graduates for college level research.

**Stevens, C., & Campbell, P. (2008). Collaborating with librarians to develop lower division Political Science Students' Information Literacy Competencies. *Journal Of Political Science Education*, 4(2), 225-252. doi:10.1080/15512160801998114**

The authors of this article address the importance of collaborating with librarians beyond the one-shot library presentation. Examples of faculty working together with librarians to develop undergraduate political science lessons infused with information literacy are presented. Both librarians and subject based faculty interested in developing teaching skills that will help students improve their research efforts will benefit from reading this article.

**Travis, T. (2011). From the classroom to the boardroom: The impact of information literacy instruction on workplace research skills. *Education Libraries*, 34(2), 19-31.**

The subject of information literacy and how it relates to workplace readiness in college graduates is addressed in this article. Academic librarians who have an interest in infusing IL into the curriculum to support general education outcomes in students, who will eventually take these skills with them to the workplace, will find this article relevant. From an embedded standpoint, academic librarians who are able to partner with faculty and/or administration responsible for curriculum development are in a good position to align instruction to meet the needs of today's employers.

**Tumbleson, B. E., & Burke, J. (2013). *Embedding librarianship in learning management systems: A how-to-do-it manual for librarians*. Chicago: ALA Neal-Schuman.**

A terrific reference for academic librarians who wish to gain insight on how to develop and implement a successful embedded librarian program, this text presents readers with a comprehensive guide on everything to consider before, during and after implementing an embedded project. The authors of this book have provided us with a model of what to expect from the research we gather.

**Watson, S., Rex, C., Markgraf, J., Kishel, H., Jennings, E., & Hinnant, K. (2013). *Revising the "one-shot" through lesson study: Collaborating with writing faculty to rebuild a library instruction session*. *College & Research Libraries*, 74(4), 381-398.**

As many librarians continually struggle to make the best out of the one-shot information literacy instruction session, it's always refreshing to read about new and creative ways educators around the country are doing it. In a year-long study, librarians and English instructors at one university worked together to revise a lesson that would improve one-shot information literacy instruction sessions. The authors share the methods and strategies used to develop focus groups, surveys, and the exchanging of ideas and expectations from all of the participants for the purpose of improving the one-shot experience.

**Weiner, S. (2011). *Information literacy and the workforce: A review*. *Education Libraries*, 34(2), 7-14.**

A reference for librarians who may be interested in embedding themselves within campus programs that support workplace readiness and lifelong skills, this article brings to light the need for librarians to design information literacy instruction that prepares

college graduates for the professional world of work. Through a review of publications related to the subject of IL and the workforce, an examination of the nature of information literacy as it relates to the workplace versus academia is presented.

**York, A. C., & Vance, J. M. (2009). Taking library instruction into the online classroom: Best practices for embedded librarians. *Journal Of Library Administration*, 49(1/2), 197-209. doi:10.1080/01930820802312995**

Through a review of the literature that addresses the best practices for library instruction in an online environment, the authors of this article discuss the ways in which librarians are taking advantage of the virtual classroom. Discovering new ways to embed ourselves to become team-teaching partners with our non-librarian counterparts is now the norm. The authors of this article share ideas that go beyond best practices in pedagogy; methods for developing relationships with faculty, the assessment of online instruction, as well as professional development initiatives that will keep us abreast of the educational technology utilized in Learning Management Systems is also shared.