Introduction

To provide a benchmark for current practices in embedded librarianship, I used both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the similarities and differences among embedded librarian activities at six different U.S. institutions. I used a series of interviews, document reviews, and surveys to gather information about librarian experiences working with online courses.

Research Questions:
- What do embedded librarians do in online courses? How do they feel about the embedded experience?
  - Determine common practices
    - Activities
    - Promotion methods
  - Assess various experiences
    - Time management
    - Number of people involved
    - Common vs. un-common experiences

Methods

Sample Characteristics:
- Six participants (academic librarians)
- Several different institutional types
- Geographically dispersed

Data Gathering Methods:
- Email discussions
- Observation of participants’ library websites
- Online survey
- Phone interviews

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution ID</th>
<th>Institution 1</th>
<th>Institution 2</th>
<th>Institution 3</th>
<th>Institution 4</th>
<th>Institution 5</th>
<th>Institution 6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>public</td>
<td>public</td>
<td>private</td>
<td>public</td>
<td>public</td>
<td>private</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTE enrollment</td>
<td>&lt;2K students</td>
<td>&lt;2K students</td>
<td>&lt;2K students</td>
<td>&lt;2K students</td>
<td>&lt;2K students</td>
<td>&lt;2K students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie Class</td>
<td>master’s colleges &amp; universities</td>
<td>doctoral-granting</td>
<td>associate’s colleges</td>
<td>master’s colleges &amp; universities</td>
<td>associate’s colleges</td>
<td>doctoral-granting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Tennessee</td>
<td>Florida</td>
<td>Arkansas</td>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Arizona</td>
<td>Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># sections/semester</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>5 or less</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>all branches</td>
<td>all branches</td>
<td>all branches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># staff involved</td>
<td>1 librarian, 6 librarians</td>
<td>1 librarian</td>
<td>1 librarian, 2 librarians</td>
<td>1 librarian, 1 library technologist</td>
<td>1 librarian, 1 library technologist</td>
<td>1 librarian, 1 library technologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-consuming?</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Discussion

Findings:
- Prevalence of term “embedded librarian”
- Difficulty defining the role of the embedded librarian
- Prevalence of proactive email
- Feeling “busy” and related to course load

Best Practices:
- Develop the service with partners
- Create automated library module
- Email the faculty about service
- Define embedded librarian’s role
- Post in one library-specific discussion board
- Discussion board alerts (RSS)
- Save posts for future use
- Check courses at set times
- Plan ahead for assignment deadlines
- Proactively post information at point-of-need

Directions for Future Research:
- Purpose
  - Why were these services created?
  - What are they designed to do best?
- Efficacy
  - Is the service effective at that purpose?
  - Is there a discernable difference for students?
- Motivation
  - Why do librarians decide to embed?
- Expectations vs. realities
  - After the initial service, did its purpose change?
  - Was the service continued or abandoned?