6-2019

Developing a Peer-Mentoring Program to Expand Information Literacy across Campus

Lydia C. Gwyn
East Tennessee State University, Sherrod Library, gwynlc@etsu.edu

Jonathan Wilson
East Tennessee State University, wilsonjr3@etsu.edu

Citation Information

Developing a Peer-Mentoring Program to Expand Information Literacy across Campus

Developing a Peer-Mentoring Program to Expand Information Literacy Across Campus

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY, SHERROD LIBRARY

JONATHAN WILSON | WILSONJR3@ETSU.EDU

LYDIA GWYN | GWYNLC@ETSU.EDU

The Innovative Library Classroom Conference (2019)
William & Mary, Williamsburg, VA

A Peer-Mentoring Approach to Research Help?

WHAT IS A LIBRARY AMBASSADOR?

Li.brar.y Am.bas.sa.dor: (noun)

an undergraduate student hired by the library who has received two semesters of information literacy and research skills instruction and spends their following semesters deployed in academic buildings and computer labs across campus helping students with their research.

WHY A PEER LEARNING MODEL?

Peer learning programs have proven successful in tutoring centers & elsewhere in the university

People from similar social groups, not professionals, help each other to learn and in turn help themselves

Trained undergraduates are ideal for delivering general reference and information literacy instruction

Student engagement, library use, and library instruction all have positive impacts on retention; peer learning addresses each of these areas

The advantages of peer learning also include opportunities for empathy, bonding, and lowered anxiety

Bodemer, B. (2014). They can and they should: Undergraduates providing peerreference and instruction. *College & Research Libraries, 75*(2), 162-178.

Pilot Program Timeline

SPRING-SUMMER 2017

Plan

- How many ambassadors?
- What type of students?
- What interview questions to ask?
- How much training?

FALL 2017

Hire & Train

- Hire Ambassadors
- Begin first semester of information literacy instruction
- Develop Syllabus

SPRING 2018

Train & Specialize

- Last semester of information literacy instruction
- Ambassadors begin to specialize in the databases of their respective majors
- Reach out to academic departments for deployment
- Reach out to satellite campuses for deployment

FALL 2018

Implement

- Ambassadors deployed across campus to help students with research
- Hire 25 new ambassadors for main campus, hire ambassadors at satellite campuses & begin first semester of information literacy instruction

HIRING STUDENTS

- Decide which population(s) and which type of student workers to target

- Some ambassadors will drop out or transfer

- Start small and grow slowly; quality over quantity

- Work with scholarship office or financial aid to find the right students

- Develop strong interview questions; look for students with customer service skills

DESIGNING CURRICULUM

Develop research questions & identify keywords/search terms

Use OneSearch, databases, Google Scholar, and the Web to find quality sources of information

Evaluate sources of information

Differentiate between popular, scholarly, trade sources & primary, secondary, & tertiary sources

Specialize in the databases of their field

Know about campus resources for students experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, etc.

MORE ON CURRICULUM

- Develop a syllabus with student learning outcomes

- Assess often

- You can't lecture all the time (gamification, roleplaying)

- Traditional weekly classes are better than online classes

- Keep copies of assignments and handouts in an online platform for students

- Create a culminating assignment with a reward component

- Textbooks can be expensive; use OERs or develop your own materials
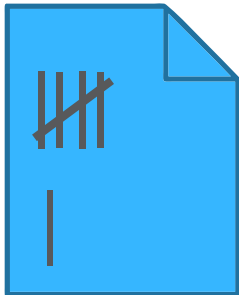
Develop Assessment Instruments

Pre, Mid, and Post Asssessment of ambassadors during training

Transaction Data for each research question asked

Optional student feedback survey

Contacts made while deployed

ESTABLISH PARTNERSHIPS

- Great partnerships come from unexpected places (tell everyone you can about your program; people will want to work with you)

- Set up meetings with chairs and deans whose departments you want to work with; get yourself invited to their faculty or board meetings

- Stay in contact with your partners; send an end-of-the-semester report, email updates

SECURE DEPLOYMENT LOCATIONS

- Think outside the box and go where the students are

- Some locations won't work out

- Each location has its own logistical issues

- Consider a time management system as program grows

Think Big for the Future

- Ambassadors stationed in most academic building, residence hall, and computer lab

- Ambassador programs at all satellite campuses

- Collaborate with area community colleges to hire transfer students into the program

- Collaborate with the CFAA to cross-train ambassadors and tutors in both areas

- Target students on academic probation: hire them as ambassadors

- More staff (teaching and administrative); hire students in spring and fall