Team Work Makes the Dream Work

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*Meghan Dowell | Consulting Librarian | Beloit College*

*Jedidiah Rex | Instructional Technologist | Beloit College*

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**Slide 1**

*Title*

**Slide 2**

*Introductions*

[MD] Hello, my name is Meghan Dowell and I'm the consulting librarian at Beloit College. My position includes instruction, data analysis, and administration of LibGuides.

[JR] Hi! I'm Jedidiah. I am an instructional technologist and work with faculty and students to use technology in their courses. I also administer our learning management system, Moodle.

**Slide 3**

*About Beloit College*

[MD] A bit about us, but first a quick show of hands: who here knows where Beloit College is located?

Beloit is a small undergraduate liberal arts college located on the border of Wisconsin and Illinois. One thing we want to point out is that we do not require a common course for all students, where library instruction typically happens at other institutions.

**Slide 4**

*“The Past” title slide*
Today we will be taking a chronological look at the evolution of our group and working space while discussing our collaborative projects and the relationship between librarians and instructional technologists.

Slide 5

Small Pool

Prior to 2010 instructional technology was located in Mayer Hall (IT) which is across campus from the library. The IT department housed the “Faculty Resource Room,” a space with a few computers, document scanners, and a well-loved (or hated) slide scanner for faculty to use. The purpose of this space was for faculty to develop materials for their courses and be able to meet with the instructional technologist. Resources were limited to a specific location and specific hours.

Slide 6

Medium Pool

There was a desire from management to make the resource room more accessible to faculty as IT is only open during normal business hours and so a decision was made to move the resource room into the Library. The instructional technologist would staff the area during the week, but faculty would have access to the space as long as the Library was open. Another purpose in this move was to facilitate more interaction between instructional technology and library staff. It was into this environment that I began my trek at Beloit College in 2010.

Slide 7

Ocean

Part of my charge when I began working at Beloit was to find ways to increase collaboration between instructional technology and library reference staff. This began slowly, like any other relationship. Some early
collaboration took the form of participation on a committee tasked with creating learning opportunities for faculty, staff, and students; the hiring and training of tech support students; and working together on some class workshops. Things went on like this for a while. After some restructuring within IT and the Library, the tools provided in the resource room were spread out across multiple public locations increasing access to those tools and to professional staff.

**Slide 8**

[MD] Moving from the past to present. Our current configuration began as I started at Beloit two years ago the room is named and centered as a hub for collaborative learning and teaching. We named our office the Library & Instructional Technology Engagement room, or LITE for short.

**Slide 9**

*LITE room pic*

[MD] What we see here is the LITE office today. We have two instructional technologists and three librarians in the space. Moving counter clockwise, Adam: instructional technology specialist, Jedidiah: instructional technologist, Josh: digital resources librarian, Chris: public services librarian, and myself: consulting librarian. The office is an open concept with a meeting table in the middle and cubicles around the outer edge. The arrangement is intended to increase collaboration and spark ideas. Another fast survey, raise your hand if your institution has a similar setup. Okay, great. Now, raise your hand if you would like this setup.

**Slide 10**

*Judith Logan quote*

[MD] Here is something I’d like you to keep in mind for the remainder of our presentation. I’d also invite you to begin thinking about the ways in which your libraries are collaborating now or how you want to be collaborating -
we’ll want to hear from you toward the end. A year and a half after I started I was reading the ACRLog and this quote by Judith Logan hit home and seems to be reminiscent of our truth.

**Slide 11**

*Collaboration list*

[JRW] Here is a preview of the projects that we have collaborated on so far. We will share more about each in the next few slides. If you would like clarification on any of our projects, please feel free to ask, but otherwise we will have a time for questions and answers at the end.

**Slide 12**

*Workgroup collaboration*

[JRW] A priority of the Library’s strategic mission was to create a number of workgroups, one of which is an instruction/consultation work group whose focus is to support teaching and learning. The group consists of 2 instructional technologists, 3 librarians, and 2 archivists.

[MDW] While the goal is to meet monthly, often work gets in the way. Depending on the project, we’ll work in smaller groups to maintain our momentum. Our meetings are an opportunity to discuss and plan any collaboration opportunities for students and faculty, and to help each other identify and cultivate faculty partnerships. Often describe the type of instruction we give and where we see possibilities to engage further.

**Slide 13**

*Accessibility*

[JRW] We have had the opportunity to assist in providing accommodations for an increasing number of students. Through increased collaboration with our Learning Enrichment and Disability Services office we supported the
installation of JAWS screen reading software and created resources for campus constituents to use in support of the assistive technology.

[MD] As part of the support of the installation included testing of the software with students and creating documentation and providing training for faculty and staff. We also created OCR scanning documentation to assist with the on demand creation of accessible documents.

**Slide 14**

*Moodle + LibGuides*

[MD] The college implemented LibGuides in the fall of 2014 from static HTML pages with links and brief bits of text. To increase engagement I worked closely with Jedidiah to embed guides into Moodle, in an effort to meet the students where they currently work. Subject guides are accessible through a dropdown menu on the homepage, after login. Course specific guides can be embedded directly into a Moodle course upon the request of the faculty because of profile settings in Moodle. For a specific example: the guide which had the most success is our ESL guide which saw over a 200% increase in use once embedded into the Moodle course.

[JR] This was one of our first collaborations. The main task that I had was looking for ways and locations to integrate links and embed widgets for our LibGuides. For me that meant time spent testing and making sure they worked. I would work on something, share it with Meghan to test, and then go on from there. I also made an agile way, in the form of a custom role, for the library staff to log in to Moodle and add library resources to courses for their faculty.

[MD] A shameless plug: More on the specifics of this project can be found in a forthcoming Rowman & Littlefield publication "Innovative LibGuides Applications: Real World Examples" where a grad school colleague and I talk
about how we implemented the relationship between Moodle and LibGuides at our home institutions.

**Slide 15**

*Digital Project Support*

[J.R.] We are seeing an uptick in media and/or digital humanities projects. Show of hands: how many of you are noticing the same? Part of what instructional technology does is to provide support to students using a particular tool or set of tools to create these projects. An example of this is when I meet with a class and provide demonstrations of iMovie, Audacity, or other application. After the class session I make myself available to students as a resource if they need further help. We also get student and faculty walk-ins from time to time. The library houses two media labs containing software for audio and video creation/editing and the like. We have an audio recording booth in one of the labs. My colleague Adam and I have created documentation to support the use of the equipment in these spaces. We often provide direct support to students working in the space.

[M.D.] The librarians do their best to assist the students with the software if the instructional technologists are not readily available. By utilizing the manuals created by Adam, Google, and some patience most of our students leave happy. For example, a student was having difficulty exporting a video from Final Cut for their class in 20 minutes. With some patience and chocolate, I was able to get the video onto a thumb drive and her off to class. Other types of digital support I can provide, which are not DH, are data analysis in SPSS and STATA and Zotero.

[J.R.] Another project that we have been privileged to collaborate on is around building a site for crowdsourcing transcription of Archive materials based off of the DIYHistory project at the University of Iowa. Our project resulted from one of our history faculty who won a grant to pursue this. The funds allowed the faculty member to attend some conferences centered on digital
humanities and for a group of us to attend a THATCamp. We later brought in a developer, Matthew Butler, from U of Iowa to help us get the site up and running. He provided some support after his visit also.

This project requires multi-level support from the library archives, digital collections, and instructional technology. The faculty member, college archivist and digital collections librarian work together to identify the collections that will be imported into the transcription site. I primarily collaborate with our digital collections librarian (Josh Hickman) working on getting the materials from our ContentDM instance into the transcription site. Right now this involves a manual process of creating csv files to pull the items from our digital archive into the transcription site which runs on Omeka. I also work on the web side of the project helping build the front-end.

Slide 16

Printing Initiative

[MD] During the summer of 2015 the administration implemented mediated printing with thresholds for students. The initiative is to control waste and provide security when printing documents. We were asked by the director of IT, as a preemptive gesture, to create a resource to assist faculty choosing to make their course readings and assignments more digital. This LibGuide is tactile evidence of collaboration. We focused on our team’s expertise to divvy the work of finding resources to populate each tab. The idea here was that, “many hands make light work”.

Slide 17

Hacker Group

[MD]: After an edu-PLACE (formerly edu_ISIS) presentation about skill building we decided to assemble and call ourselves the Hacker Study Group, that meets weekly to work through coding classes together. The key to our success is pace our work each other to ensure the we all cross the finish line
at the same time. The choice to use Code Academy was fiscal, as it is free. Management supports our decision to set aside an hour a week to focus on professional development. To date, we've completed HTML/CSS, PHP, and Building a Website. We are currently working on the Javascript course.

[JR]: Part of the benefit of working together in this way is bouncing ideas off of each other to improve the learning process and help each other through the sticky spots. A goal of this work is learning a new skill, but more important than that is building our relationships to make collaboration easier in other venues. Our work together in **this thing** helps us work together on **other things**.

**Slide 18**

*Conferences*

[JR] We appreciate the institutional support we have received from our directors since coming together in the LITE room. We have been given the autonomy to pursue naturally formed initiatives. Due to that freedom, our conference proposal was able to come together quickly through organic collaboration and zero bureaucracy. We don’t think our collaboration on this would have happened if we weren’t in the same space. As a result of this work together on this we will have the opportunity to present at other conferences.

**Slide 19**

*Future title slide*

[MD] Now shifting gears to the future.

**Slide 20**

*Challenges*

[JR] One of our challenges has been bandwidth. We are defining bandwidth here as a limit in personnel and expertise. An example of this is related to the
transcription project I mentioned earlier. The site is built on two open-source platforms, Omeka and Mediawiki, that require programming expertise to efficiently run or troubleshoot. We are using forked versions of plugins we received from the U of Iowa. If something were to break we don’t have the expertise in-house to fix it. We’re not coders. We are also running with what feels like a lean crew. All of us are pulled in many different directions. We are doing our best to support the project, but see where having more people and people with a specific skill set would make this project better and more easily sustainable.

The pressure we feel from this project is compounded by increasing number of faculty who want to integrate DH projects into their courses. They do not always think about the support that may be required for a particular project.

**Slide 21**

*Triangle*

[MD] In addition to bandwidth, we are all facing issues with the trifecta of usual suspects: time/money/space. Here is where we want to choose all three options and the reality is you can only choose two.

**Slide 22**

*Challenges*

[MD] Another challenge is accepting failure. We’ve had projects suffer from their failure to launch. We have created and prepared workshops for faculty with low to no workshop attendance. We also attempted this for students with little success. There is some difficulty selling instruction ideas to faculty, even though we come up with really great ideas. Finally, I tried out a satellite reference desk in one of our academic buildings and the campus coffee shop. Everyone loved the idea, no one used me as a resource.
As with many institutions, one of the challenges that we have faced is constituent buy-in. Some choose to not enter fully into the spirit of collegial collaboration. When that happens we have been able to persevere.

**Slide 23**

*Bug’s life gif*

Through team building we have been able to help folks out of their comfort zones and guide us all to success.

**Slide 24**

*Opportunities*

One of the ways that we are building for the future is to foster relationships within our group. We accomplish this by working together on things like the coding classes. These experiences together help build familiarity and collegiality within the group.

We will continue to support the projects we already do and also look to see how we as a group can best support digital humanities on our campus. I also see a confluence of media and information literacies that we may be able to develop training around. In addition we are looking into ways to best support the use of video in classes. Doing so requires a multi-pronged approach and I see this is a prime area where we can work together.

One thing that we want to develop is joint class and course involvement. When faculty members share assignments with reference librarians we have started to disseminate these within the workgroup for collective knowledge, planning, and technological support. Or we refer a faculty member to the other group when the expertise requirements change. For instance, Sociology’s research methods class is conducting interviews for the library on how students use our services. The professor expects the interviews to be recorded and transcribed but hadn’t provided the students with a way to do this efficiently. Through our workgroup meeting we were
able to identify the problem and provide a solution. Students are now working with Jedidiah and Adam to simplify transcriptions using voice typing in Google docs.

### Slide 25

**Take-Away**

[JR] So what? What is the point to all of this?

- **Institutional Support** - Strategic planning within our respective departments created a conducive environment for increased collaboration. Moving toward our current model would have been much more difficult if not impossible without this support.

- **Team building** - The freedom we have been given to pursue something together that may not directly relate to our everyday work is valuable in building relationships in our team. This is an important piece to increasing the frequency and collegiality of collaboration.

[MD]

- **Geographic space** - Being together in the same space creates an environment in which we can more easily collaborate. It literally removes barriers.

- **Creative thinking** - Being open to try new things and see things in different ways is crucial to being able to collaborate. We do and will fail while we try to find solutions, and that is okay.

- **Faculty outreach** - The outreach approach has been two-pronged. We attend departmental meetings to advise on what the library and technology can support and we also share information given to use by faculty in the form of assignments or projects.

### Slide 26

*What about you, what are you collaborating on?*
How are you managing expectations of faculty?
How do you address bandwidth issues?

Slide 27

Thank you!!