How does a small enterprising library with big ideas get down to the business of spreading the world about their ever-expanding information literacy program and new products and services? Creating a faculty toolkit offered the Middlesex Community College librarians the opportunity to market to all instructors (part-time, full-time, online, off-site) and the flexibility to manage information as needed. The toolkit has also been showcased during advisory and division liaison meetings, new faculty orientations, and other venues. Tools (pages) in the guide highlight details of the college’s information literacy program: best practices contributed by faculty; a sample assessment rubric developed for faculty; a hot topic page on visual literacy; new product and services pages; and pages devoted to various faculty communities.

One important component of the MxCC Library’s mission is to support teaching and learning of information literacy skills within the college’s on-campus and distance learning programs through collaboration with faculty. The college has established competencies in information literacy (IL) that students should attain upon graduation; these competencies are based on the Association of College & Research Libraries’ (ACRL) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. All faculty, full and part-time, are encouraged to incorporate IL learning outcomes into their courses where they can.

Some courses are designated as “L” (Library Research). A “L” course is one that requires some form of research project and includes at least one formal class session on information access and retrieval. Middlesex students must have successfully passed two “L” courses by the time they have completed 60 credits. For example, completing ENG 101 fulfills one L-course requirement.

In the Fall of 2009, an online “faculty toolkit” was created to share various guidelines and best practices to assist in achieving the goal of moving students along the info lit continuum, and includes ways librarians and faculty members can work collaboratively on this important initiative. The toolkit was created, and is updated effortlessly, using Springshare’s LibGuides online subscription software. It is, however, important to note that LibGuides was not a requirement for creating the toolkit. The information could just as easily been compiled in a wiki or any dedicated section on a library’s website, or communicated using some other vehicle.

The ‘how’ is secondary to the “what”. In addition to details of the college’s and library’s information literacy initiatives, the toolkit includes pages showing best practices and sample assignments contributed by faculty; assessment ideas; “hot topic” pages; new product and services pages; and dedicated resources for various faculty communities such as adjuncts, online instructors, and members at our satellite location.
The toolkit can be accessed by all faculty members on an ongoing basis. Librarians point faculty to it on various occasions to answer questions that arise and promote it heavily throughout the semester in their roles as division liaisons. The Library Advisory Board meets twice a year and often the ‘Hot Topic’ page and any new products or services are presented via the toolkit. It is the “star of the show” during New Adjunct Faculty Boot Camp each semester. The kit has provided librarians with the opportunity to work collaboratively with faculty on some of the pages, including best practices and examples of effective information literacy assignments.

Looking at usage statistics (not including the ‘Home’ page), “Competency Levels”, “Best Practices”, “IL @ MxCC”, and “In Blackboard” (which is aimed at faculty teaching online) consistently show the highest number of hits.

Any librarian on our small staff can make changes or add pages to the kit as needed. The ease in making these changes and its “place for everything and everything in its place” concept makes the toolkit extremely attractive to librarians and faculty alike. Positive comments from faculty members have been peppered throughout the guide. The kit is a great marketing vehicle for library resources. Links to pertinent books in the catalog and topical articles are featured prominently, support services for students are noted, and information on copyright and other issues important to faculty are addressed.

Promoting information literacy skills is vital to our library’s—and the college’s—mission. Faculty and librarians must work collaboratively towards this goal and the toolkit serves as tangible evidence that this collaboration is occurring. It is not one size fits all, appealing to various instructor communities equally – full-time, part-time, on ground, online, main campus and satellite location. It is fluid, changing as the need for information and support evolves.


MxCC Faculty Toolkit found online at <www.mxcc.libguides.com/iltoolkit>

MxCC Library Mission Statement found online at <www.mxcc.commnet.edu/Content/Mission.asp>