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## Exploring Professional Identities in Libraries: The Impact of Credit-Bearing Courses Beyond Student Learning

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# Exploring Professional Identities in Libraries: The Impact of Credit-Bearing Courses Beyond Student Learning

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## Abstract

In this essay, we argue in support of library-led information literacy (IL) credit courses, emphasizing the impact that developing, teaching, and managing these courses can have on the professional identity of library faculty and staff. Existing research has indicated that librarians who teach credit courses may more strongly identify as teachers than those who teach only course-integrated sessions. We expand on this research by sharing the perspective of four individuals who are involved in the design, instruction, and coordination of credit-bearing IL courses, including two faculty librarians and two staff members. By providing these differing voices, we give a unique perspective on a critical question in the field: Should libraries offer credit-bearing IL courses?

*Keywords:* credit-bearing courses, information literacy, professional identity

## *Perspectives*

**edited by Andrea Baer**

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## Exploring Professional Identities in Libraries: The Impact of Credit-Bearing Courses Beyond Student Learning

In 2008, William Badke outlined ten reasons why academic libraries need to teach credit-bearing information literacy (IL) courses. Among his reasons, Badke highlighted the vital nature of IL and the legitimacy of IL as an academic discipline. While Badke does not cite research to support his argument, the findings of several research studies, as well as anecdotal evidence provided by librarians who have taught credit courses, do provide indications that credit IL courses can positively impact student learning and success (Cook, 2014; Grandy, 2019; Jones & Mastroiilli, 2022; Mery et al., 2012a; 2012b; Neff, 2013; O'Malley, 2009; Stonebraker & Fundator, 2016). However, Cohen et al. (2016) found that relatively few academic libraries actually offer credit courses.

In this essay, we would like to offer an argument in support of libraries teaching credit courses when possible. Rather than focusing on the benefits for students, however, we emphasize the impact of these courses on the professional identity of librarians and library staff members. Existing research already demonstrates that teaching credit courses can influence librarians' teacher identities, both in terms of how strongly librarians identify as teachers and their enjoyment of teaching (Becksford, 2022; Davis et al., 2011). Our essay offers an expanded perspective on this research by considering the impact of developing, managing, and teaching credit courses on four individuals with significantly different roles within The Ohio State University Libraries:

- Daniel: Faculty librarian and head of a campus library. He developed and teaches two credit courses.
- Hanna: Staff member who is the library's instructional designer. She led the redesign of two credit-bearing courses, is participating in the design of a third course, and has also acted as a course instructor.
- Jane: Faculty librarian whose primary role focuses on instructor development. She has taught two of the library's credit courses.
- Diana: Staff member who is an eLearning instructional associate. She is the coordinator for the library's credit courses.

By sharing our voices, we hope to make a unique contribution to support credit-bearing IL courses.

Before proceeding, we want to acknowledge that there are legitimate reasons why some libraries may be unable to offer credit courses, such as lack of staffing or institutional context. Toward the end of the essay, we offer suggestions for how librarians can overcome potential barriers to offering credit courses. However, in those cases where these suggestions will not work, we hope that our experiences may still encourage librarians to be open to other opportunities to teach courses for credit (without over-extending themselves), even if through other departments or programs. This would allow them to get a taste of this style of teaching without requiring the library to commit to offering credit courses.

## Literature Review

Academic libraries have been teaching courses for credit since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Salony, 1995). It can be challenging to determine the number of libraries that offer credit courses, but recent evidence has suggested that the number is limited and may have declined. Kirkendall reported in 1980 that 42% of academic libraries (out of more than 800 surveyed) offered credit courses. However, in 1997 Shirato and Badics found that around 30% of libraries offered a basic-level credit course. Owusu-Ansah (2004) speculated that poor enrollment numbers combined with limited time and staffing were potential reasons why libraries seemed to be moving away from credit courses. Unfortunately, the decline continued. In their 2016 study, Cohen et al. found that only 19% (of 691) of institutions taught courses for credit. They also noted that some respondents indicated that their library had discontinued credit courses. The authors concluded that, when compared with other types of instruction offered by libraries, such as workshops or online tutorials, credit courses were underused. They suggested that lack of staffing and lack of tenure status for librarians may contribute to the inability of some libraries to offer courses for credit. Comments from their survey participants also highlighted budget concerns and inadequate institutional support and staffing as barriers to providing or maintaining credit courses.

Overall, evidence has shown that relatively few academic libraries currently offer credit courses. While we understand that multiple factors can impact a specific library's ability to offer a credit course, we are concerned by these findings. As already noted, studies have demonstrated the potential benefits of such courses on student learning and success. For

example, Mery et al. (2012b) found that students who completed an online credit-bearing IL course improved their IL skills more than those who received instruction from their English composition instructor or in the one-shot format from a librarian. Cook's (2014) article discovered a significant correlation between graduation rates and library credit courses, with strong indications that students who took a library credit course at one institution graduated at a much higher rate than other students. While these are only two examples, they support the argument that teaching credit courses is important because they can support student learning and success. (For additional consideration of the connections between credit courses and student learning, see Grandy, 2019; Jones & Mastrorilli, 2022; Mery et al., 2012b; Neff, 2013; O'Malley, 2009; Stonebraker & Fundator, 2016).

While the potential impact on student learning has been a major reason to advocate for credit courses, we would like to focus our argument on the impact these courses can have on the professional identity of library staff and faculty. Of course, we are not the first to make such an argument. For example, Kemp (2006) outlined many benefits of librarians teaching credit courses, including "a deeper understanding of faculty workloads, student needs, and administrative requirements," "increased intellectual stimulation," and "enhancement of faculty status" (p. 5).

Research also has shown that teaching credit courses can impact how librarians think about themselves as teachers and their professional satisfaction. Davis et al. (2011) found that librarians who teach both credit courses and course-integrated instruction were more likely than librarians who taught only course-integrated instruction to agree or strongly agree that they considered themselves teachers. More significantly, when asked whether they agreed with the statement "I consider myself as much of a teacher as the professors who teach outside the library," those librarians who taught credit courses were more likely to agree or strongly agree than those who taught only course-integrated instruction (Davis et al., 2011, pp. 692–693). Based on these findings, Davis et al. argue that the model of IL instruction can impact the degree to which librarians think of themselves as teachers. More recently, Becksford (2022) found that librarians who taught more credit courses are more likely to agree with the statement "I enjoy teaching." (p. 380). Becksford suggested that the agency a librarian has when teaching their own class and the ability to engage with more complex material contribute to increased satisfaction.

As evidence has shown, there are significant reasons why libraries need to offer credit courses, and not just because they can impact student learning. The remainder of this essay

builds upon this evidence by describing how our experiences designing, managing, and teaching credit courses have impacted our professional identities.

## Our Courses

The Ohio State University Libraries currently offers four credit courses (a fifth is in development). The courses were developed at different periods and have different objectives, but all are centered on supporting students' IL. These courses are offered through a Memorandum of Understanding with the College of Arts and Sciences. The courses have several commonalities:

- Taught by a library professional
- Seven-week term with no prerequisite
- Online asynchronous format with no required textbook
- Undergraduate level

The four courses are:

- Arts & Sciences 1411 - Information Formats (1 credit): This course gives students an overview of various information formats. Students examine these formats to understand better their elements, how those resources are used, and their importance to disciplines.
- Arts & Sciences 2120 - Information Search, Evaluation, and Use (2 credits): This course helps students develop the skills and habits to responsibly find, consume, create, and share information online. Students leave the course as intentional, reflective, and critical information consumers.
- Arts & Sciences 2121 - Academic Online Research (2 credits): This course helps students develop skills and habits that are necessary to be successful on research assignments in college, as well as situations that require information use in professional, personal, and civic contexts.
- Arts & Sciences 3142 - Online Research and the Science Literature (2 credits): This course helps students explore the scientific literature by examining discipline-specific and interdisciplinary search tools. This course is designed for life/physical sciences and engineering students.

## Our Perspectives

For each of our narratives below, we will focus on how our involvement with these courses has impacted our identities as teachers, our personal sense of professional legitimacy, and our engagement with other instructors and librarians, including questions such as:

- How has developing and/or teaching credit courses impacted the way we interact with instructors external to the library and how we are perceived?
- How has developing and/or teaching credit courses impacted the way we interact with librarian instructors (other librarians who also teach credit courses)?
- How has developing and/or teaching credit courses impacted the way we engage with other librarians (who do not teach credit courses)?

We want to clarify that in discussing how our work teaching credit courses impacts our professional legitimacy, we are not implying that librarians who do not teach credit courses lack legitimacy. Instead, we are sharing our own perspectives on how teaching these courses impacts the recognition of our instructional endeavors by colleagues outside of the library.

Daniel (Course Creator – Faculty)

My involvement in our credit courses was initially in the instructor role, teaching both Academic Online Research (2121) and Information Search, Evaluation, and Use (2120) several times. Based on this experience, I perceived a need for additional courses to address concepts and subjects not covered in the existing courses. This led to the creation of two new courses, the first geared toward science students, Online Research and the Science Literature (3142), and then several years later, the Information Formats (1411) course. The 3142 course was developed to give undergraduate science students experience with finding and using information sources in the sciences, something not always encountered in their courses. The 1411 course came about after I learned that many students do not understand the different information formats that exist, seemingly to call nearly any type of text an article. As course creator, I developed the concept for each course, formed the course objectives, drafted a plan for content and assignments, and was responsible for other requirements and justifications as the courses went through the approval process. Since approval, I have acted as the primary instructor and instructional designer for the two courses.

Creating and teaching both courses enables me to better interact with instructors on campus on course development, content choice, and assignment creation. For example, I use the Learning Management System extensively, I have steered a course from its inspiration to its implementation, and I have taught most sections of each of these courses and have made improvements based on each offering. Therefore, I can talk with experience when working with instructors who want to create or revise their own courses. I can also offer guidance on less intense changes, such as integrating library resources (ebooks, articles, streaming video, etc.) into the course, addressing IL concepts, or considering assignment options.

In addition, I can also work with other librarians who want to do similar work. They may be trying to develop their own course, revise an existing course, or even just want to try something new in their one-shot visits. I can share my experience of what works for online courses and what does not and suggest potential solutions to their teaching issues. This is not just limited to people teaching credit courses, of course. I have done the same for those doing teaching-adjacent activities, such as student worker training, for which I also provide assistance. I can also sometimes use what I learn from my credit course teaching to improve my own one-shot visits.

In short, I have been where other instructors are and can use my own experiences to offer guidance. This also includes learning from things that did not work well. I am constantly seeking ways to improve these courses and have stories about something I tried that was an utter failure for one reason or another. In turn, I, of course, learn from others. When talking with other instructors and librarians, I often walk away with inspiration for something I can try. For example, several years ago, I assisted an instructor with developing a tiered assignment to help solve an issue they were having with the quality of student submissions. I used this idea in my own course to solve a similar issue, resulting in improved performance. So, it is a mutually beneficial relationship. As a result of these experiences, I see myself as an instructor in addition to a faculty librarian.

Hanna (Instructional Designer — Staff)

Since 2016, I have taught one of our credit-bearing courses, allowing me to experience teaching these courses from two different perspectives: as an instructor of a course with a set curriculum and as the team lead of a collaborative course redesign. The average instructional designer does not often assume the role of subject expert. However, I have been able to lead a full redesign of both Information Search, Evaluation, and Use (2120) and



Academic Online Research (2121). I have also worked as part of a team to create an entirely new course. I have led all the mentioned courses through course (re)approval processes and have ensured that the courses comply with accessibility standards. Outside of credit-bearing work, a normal part of my role is to have regular consultations advising others in the library on teaching methods.

Like many librarians, teaching was not my initial goal, nor was the role I ended up in. However, when I realized I could teach in ways that could help shift library experiences for the better, it was a natural fit. Learning to teach happened on the job through the help of supportive and encouraging supervisors. Recognizing the potential to improve library instruction in my first role, I was encouraged to self-educate and redesign. With successful implementation, student participation, and instructor requests at an all-time high, I was encouraged to continue. In my next role, with my new director's support, I applied to the Association of College and Research Libraries Teaching with Technology Immersion Program, learning foundational values that led me on the path to where I am today. I supplemented this education by attending many workshops to increase the capabilities of traditional instructors offered through my institution, easily finding parallels between their work and what I was doing. The ultimate step has been yet another degree, a PhD in Learning Technologies, elevating my knowledge in pedagogy and the social psychology behind learning and teaching with technology, and in some instructors' eyes, adding extra legitimacy to my recommendations.

At Ohio State, I transitioned from being a reference and instruction librarian who taught 60+ one-shot sessions a semester while teaching the 2120 course to being the instructional designer for the libraries. In the role of reference and instruction librarian, I was able to experience what it means to be a librarian teaching a credit-bearing course at this institution while juggling many other duties, including one-shots. This gave me insight into how to best support those who want to teach or are already teaching our credit-bearing classes, as well as librarians doing other forms of teaching that involve different tactics and methodologies. I have a ready toolkit for various teaching scenarios and understand what learning technologies are familiar to our student base, what the university sponsors, and the best practices in implementation both inside and outside our learning management system. This combination allows me to easily support novice librarians who join our institution as well as experienced instructors in their ambitions. I aim to guide librarians in feeling confident in their identity as an instructor while ensuring they have the capacity, knowledge, and support to approach teaching opportunities. Through this, I have helped

create a community of librarians who are comfortable and confident in their own teaching identities, which has led to a stronger institutional presence in many disciplines.

Teaching the course before my redesign allowed me to learn where students needed more scaffolded support, where assignments needed to shift to meet new learning outcomes, and to experience where the instructors also needed support. Developing course content and assignments is where I feel most cemented in my identity as an instructor. In the initial stages of my instructional designer role, I extensively revamped two of our credit-bearing courses, Academic Online Research (2121) and Information Search, Evaluation, and Use (2120). This required rigorous project management as I led and collaborated with a team to actualize a vision for courses that provided students with valuable academic and professional insights into best practices for information use and discovery. It was clear that redesign work needed to include the creation of new assignments that were meaningful to students and would not be a burden for already overloaded librarian instructors to grade. An epiphany I had during this experience is that the creativity necessary in being an instructor directly aligns with the creativity many librarians rely on in their roles. Being an effective instructor is about daring to explore while daring students to do the same, creating an environment where it is safe to fail, creating elaborate scaffolding to support students as they learn, and the opportunity to finally see them stand on their own for final projects, a step that librarians do not always get to see.

Finally, although I primarily work with instructors in the libraries, I believe that my teaching experience gives my advice greater legitimacy to them. Through teaching credit courses, I can observe trends in our student population and apply that knowledge to any teaching recommendations I am sharing, speaking from experience. This additional connection with instructors lends authority to my advice regarding course design and helps to cement the idea of being “one of them” rather than being seen as presuming to know what instructor experience is but being out of touch with the reality of teaching in a credit-bearing capacity.

Jane (Instructor – Faculty)

My role with the courses has primarily been as an instructor, teaching both Academic Online Research (2121) and Information Search, Evaluation, and Use (2120) more than once. In addition, I participated in the teams (led by Hanna) that conducted redesigns of both courses in the last few years. In the instructor role, my responsibilities include

communicating with the students, grading, and providing feedback. While the course structure and assignments are already developed, as the instructor, I make a significant effort to personalize the courses, such as adding weekly videos highlighting key concepts for the week.

Teaching credit courses has significantly impacted my ability to think of myself as a teacher, even more so as I moved from a non-tenure track faculty position at another institution into a tenure-track faculty position at Ohio State. In my previous positions, I primarily taught in the one-shot format. However, I also had the opportunity to teach credit-bearing courses, including both IL and history courses. At Ohio State, I no longer teach one-shot sessions. Instead, my role is focused on supporting the integration of IL into the curriculum through faculty development. The target audience for my work is primarily instructors external to the library, including graduate teaching associates, lecturers, and tenure-stream faculty. I designed and facilitated a self-paced online course for this audience entitled Teaching Information Literacy. In addition, I lead multiple IL-focused faculty development workshops each semester.

I strongly believe that teaching credit courses has significantly impacted my ability to act effectively in the faculty developer role. If I did not have experience designing and managing my own courses, I would feel less confident in my ability to guide disciplinary faculty on course and assignment (re)design. When providing faculty workshops, I frequently draw upon my credit course experience. For example, when I talk with instructors about how they can use self-explaining activities to assess students' IL, I can present one of our assignments that requires students to complete a screencast describing their evaluation process as one way to approach this type of IL goal.

Based on my work teaching credit courses, I am familiar with many of the challenges that course instructors have, such as how time-consuming grading can be. This helps me manage my expectations related to the changes that instructors can reasonably make after participating in faculty development. If I were thinking only as a faculty developer, I might feel frustrated that instructors do not quickly implement all the changes that I recommend. However, because of my experience teaching credit courses, I better understand how complicated it can be to change a course, and instructors' ability to make significant changes is sometimes limited. As a result, when I offer a faculty development program, I prioritize providing participants with practical strategies and resources that they can implement in

their courses that do not necessitate a major course overhaul. Since I have taught credit courses myself, I know how much instructors value this type of guidance.

In addition to my IL-focused faculty development work, I provide faculty development on topics not directly related to IL. I am a senior affiliate with our university's Drake Institute for Teaching and Learning. In the past two years, I have collaborated with the institute to lead book discussion groups, the first focused on James Lang's *Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning* and the second on *Teach Students How to Learn* by Saundra McGuire and Stephanie McGuire. I have also given workshops for the institute on gauging students' prior knowledge. In these cases, I am not acting as a librarian speaking about a library-related topic but as a faculty member speaking to other faculty members about pedagogy. Again, I can draw upon my credit course experiences when interacting with other instructors in this context. However, had I not had a background in teaching credit courses, I might have hesitated to place myself in a position as an expert on teaching topics outside of IL. Overall, my experience teaching credit courses supports my ability to engage with faculty outside of the library confidently and helps me be seen as a fellow educator rather than a service provider.

In addition, as I go through the tenure process, teaching credit courses contributed to my ability to craft a narrative that shows the impact of my work. At our university, the structure of the tenure dossier is formatted to fit the work of a traditional faculty member, not that of a librarian, and the same may be true at other institutions where librarians have tenure status or the equivalent. However, because I teach credit courses, my work aligns more closely with the format than it might for librarians who do not teach. This allows me to craft a narrative that is more accessible to those reviewing my case who are not librarians. For example, I can provide direct evidence of my impact on student learning and my effectiveness as a teacher by including student course evaluations as part of my dossier. The requirement that librarians need to adapt their tenure (or reappointment/promotion) narratives to the format for teaching faculty may be frustrating and unfair for librarians who are not able to teach credit courses or teach at all, and additional discussion may be needed in the field as to how to address these concerns. However, it is a reality that many librarians may face. In my case, I have found that teaching credit courses and having a teacher identity have allowed me to frame my work to show how I am supporting the institution's broader teaching and learning mission.

Diana (Course Coordinator – Staff)

I have been the course coordinator for two of these courses for the last several years, so I am closely involved in many functions: I am part of course revisions, make routine updates, and maintain the courses in the LMS. A unique function of my role is to support the instructors teaching these classes. I provide information about the upcoming course before it begins and am in touch with them regularly throughout the term with updates, reminders, etc. I also help troubleshoot problems that may arise during the term. This work has provided a lot of on-the-job learning and relationship building, all of which have contributed to developing my own teaching identity, though perhaps from a different perspective than my colleagues here as I work more with other instructors.

Belonging to a community consisting of university colleagues in similar roles and the team who run our LMS allowed me to learn from my colleagues' experiences and share my own knowledge. For example, when the university piloted a new LMS, I led a pilot course and was part of a university-wide group using and providing feedback to the LMS team on one of the tools. After the transition, I created a resource for the team based on one of my course practices. These connections teach me new ways to connect to our students and those who teach our courses, participate in conversations about trends in student and instructor experiences, and contribute to my sense of myself as an educator.

My goal when building courses in the LMS is to reduce the cognitive load of navigating the course as much as possible, both for our students and those who teach them. My relationship with our cohort of instructors helps me to do so. Our communications give me a better understanding of our students' needs, allowing me to build support into the very structure of the course. Using an accessibility-first approach to ensure that all students can access content and creating a clear, cohesive module structure provides students with everything they need to complete their work easily. Are they confused about when things are due? Hearing that feedback from instructors helps me to locate structural problems in the course that might resolve them. Because this cohort includes instructors across several campuses, our team can better understand the needs of all our students and not just those in one section.

It also helps me understand those teachers' needs so that I can apply this same approach to our course instructors. Supporting our students with resources is important, but the instructor communication built into my course coordination process also allows me to provide resources and updates to instructors, a course assignment schedule, and important

administrative deadlines. Sometimes, it even highlights where some changes may be needed in the coursework itself. I create clearly structured and concise rubrics within course assignments to make grading as simple as possible and provide help resources within the course to help instructors find answers to their questions when they need them while fostering a community among our teachers. All of these are done to lighten the load of teaching our courses.

My work with credit-bearing courses has also contributed to my recognition as an educator within the libraries where I am known as an expert in our LMS. This allowed me the opportunity to work with library colleagues, providing feedback and consultations to other teaching librarians and library staff, both for co-curricular programs and for credit-bearing courses. I worked with them to help structure courses, create content, and provide feedback on user experience and accessibility. While not teaching these credit courses directly to students, I teach course instructors to improve assignments and course content in the LMS. This has expanded beyond these courses to other LMS courses, student training, and co-curricular content. So, while my teaching experience differs from those working with students, my work has led me to become a teacher in my own right.

Because the courses we teach are fully online and asynchronous, students must be able to find and access everything easily. It is also important to provide clear directions and expectations as these students will not regularly see their instructors face to face. To meet these needs, I learned to integrate assignment-related support and campus mental health resources throughout the course and begin with an accessibility-first course and assignment design approach. I extend this model of support to the cohort of instructors teaching these courses by integrating resources for instructors while helping foster communication between them. These skills are primarily the result of building courses, supporting our instructors, and working with colleagues in the libraries and across campus. Because of this work, I can offer librarians creating instructional content advice, feedback, and answers to questions about our learning management system, which I hope pays forward some of the support I have had over the years.

## Reflecting Together

As our narratives show, we have each had different, although sometimes overlapping, roles related to our credit courses. For example, Daniel has acted as the course creator and instructor while creating course content and developing courses as an instructional

designer. Hanna acts as both an instructor and an instructional designer, creating course content and redeveloping courses. Some of the benefits we have gained are unique to specific roles, while others are common across different roles. For example, each of the four roles—creator, instructional designer, instructor, and course coordinator—has required us to develop knowledge of the university’s learning management system. In the course creator, instructional designer, and course coordinator roles, Daniel, Hanna, and Diana have developed a greater awareness of the course proposal and approval process. As course instructors, Daniel, Hanna, and Jane have the opportunity to interact with students in a manner not often available to librarians who primarily teach one-shots. Reflecting on our diverse roles, we have hopefully shown that individuals in a range of different library roles may find their professional identities impacted by their engagement with credit courses.

## Discussion and Recommendations

Based on our experiences, we believe that teaching or managing credit-bearing courses can significantly impact the teaching identity of library professionals and may influence how we are seen by others. This goes beyond the instructor of record to also include the less visible but no less important course designer and course coordinator. Each of us has described how teaching, designing, and/or managing credit courses has impacted our ability to think of ourselves as teachers. With this experience, we can craft stronger teacher identities, something that may be more challenging to those who teach primarily one-shots, where librarians are often viewed as “guest lecturers” (Bowles-Terry & Donovan, 2016, p. 138) or “babysitters” (Pagowsky, 2021, p. 304), rather than fellow educators. Moreover, within each of the four perspectives is a common thread of perceived legitimacy, in which librarians and library staff with experience teaching and managing credit courses can engage with others external to the library unit and be seen as teachers. In writing this, we are not saying that librarians who cannot teach credit courses lack legitimacy as teachers or cannot develop strong teacher identities. But, based on our experiences, we believe that teaching such courses can impact how librarians think about themselves as teachers and may influence how instructors outside the library perceive them.

As demonstrated through our four perspectives, the evolution of an instructor’s identity for those in libraries can be formed through the types of teaching they perform, but it clearly is not the only method. Hess (2020) has pointed to the length of tenure in a job, the type of degree-granting institution, and attending professional development as playing roles in creating a librarian teaching identity. We each have described our traditional and on-the-



job education as something that clearly impacted our professional selves. However, our experiences creating, designing, teaching, and managing credit-bearing courses have also impacted us.

Through each of our stories, there is a common thread of being in the right place at the right time, as well as the privilege not only to be involved in credit-bearing courses but also to be given the space that allowed for each of us to sit and reflect on what it is to teach, and how that impacts who we are in our unique roles. Our stories shared how our self-perceptions as teachers evolved due to our roles in credit-bearing courses. We recognize that there are challenges in such perspective transformation. Librarians in some roles may have more limited time for reflection and more limited opportunities to participate in the types of professional development programming that can support this type of perspective transformation. Institution types play into the capacity to engage with such opportunities, with budgetary restrictions for smaller institutions often demanding more from someone in a library role while not giving them time, space, or support in teaching or designing credit-bearing courses. While such challenges may be more common in smaller institutions, library professionals may face barriers even in larger institutions.

In scenarios where librarians and library staff are already asked to do more with less, a credit-bearing library course may seem unfeasible, but perhaps it is worth consideration. For those who are interested in potentially starting a credit course but are facing barriers, we would like to offer a few recommendations. Before considering the recommendations, however, it is important to think about whether the potential benefits of pursuing a credit course outweigh the time and effort involved in pushing past existing barriers. While we have tried to demonstrate the benefits of teaching credit courses, we acknowledge that institutional contexts vary widely. If, after consideration of your own context, it is clear that attempting to offer credit courses at this time is just not possible, then you can concentrate your efforts on other worthwhile endeavors.

However, if it has been determined that the potential benefits are worth pursuing credit courses in your library, here are some suggestions for overcoming prospective barriers:

- **Administrative Barriers:** If the barrier is due to reluctance on the part of the library administration or the college administration more broadly, you can provide evidence of successful librarian-taught courses, as well as the evidence outlined in this article of the impact of these courses on the professional identity of librarians



and staff. You can highlight the increased visibility that offering these courses may bring and the potential for increased income for the library. Reaching out to faculty in academic departments who could support a library course could also help demonstrate demand. Finally, if your institution provides the opportunity to offer temporary or trial courses, this could be a good first step to demonstrate that a permanent course is viable.

- **Curricular Infrastructure:** If the challenge is that the library, as a non-academic unit, cannot offer credit courses, you can consider developing a course to be offered through another department. Or consider offering library or IL-focused sections of existing specialized programs that offer courses, such as first-year seminar courses.
- **Time:** If the barrier is time, either to develop or teach the course, a potential option is team teaching and course design. In addition, if your institution has a teaching and learning center, they may be able to provide resources and support that can make the course design process more manageable.

Of course, credit-bearing courses are not the only option that librarians have for teaching IL. Not only do many libraries have active programs built around one-shots, but many have also built successful embedded librarian programs that involve teaching. Nor are library-led and developed credit courses always the only option that librarians have to teach for credit, as there may also be opportunities to do so through other departments or specialized programs.

## Conclusion

We have shown how involvement in managing, designing, and teaching credit courses has impacted the identity of four individuals with significantly different roles across the library. These experiences have helped us engage with faculty outside the library as fellow teachers and confidently share expertise on teaching-related topics. We better understand the perspective of teaching faculty and their challenges, allowing us to provide more appropriate types of support. In addition, we can better offer guidance for other librarians who teach or want to support the development of a broader teaching culture within the library.

We offer these perspectives to encourage librarians to continue offering existing credit courses and to develop new courses if possible. We acknowledge the legitimate reasons why it may be challenging for specific libraries to offer credit courses and understand that the

development and teaching of such courses require considerable time and effort on the part of librarians. Furthermore, we recognize that we are privileged to be at a major research university with significant resources that may make it easier for us to offer such courses. However, despite the challenges that librarians may face in implementing and maintaining credit courses, we feel that this effort needs to be made. Whenever possible, libraries need to be teaching credit courses. Not only can credit-bearing IL courses impact student learning, but our experiences show that they can have a major impact on the professional identity of library faculty and staff.

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