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Librarians As Teachers: An Interview With Oregon State University Librarians Bonnie Avery and Loretta Rielly

Janet Webster
Oregon State University

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Observations about Faculty
- Physically changing the library (i.e. our massive renovation or a more minor shifting of the collection) forces professors to re-examine their assignment. They have to talk with librarians and even come into the library to figure out where things are. The handout telling students to use the index on the third floor just doesn't work anymore.

- The early days of the Web gave librarians a foot in the door with faculty. For a while, we knew more than they did. This still works in some cases where faculty members have not connected.

Observations about Students
- Students work in our Information Commons (built up from the Information Garage) and we have learned to work with them. During the remodeling, we got used to walking around and interacting with students. It is like working in a large classroom as opposed to the old Reference Desk and Reference Area that was akin to monitoring a study hall.

- Librarians forget that to many students using the library and asking librarians for help are risky undertakings. Awareness of their risk taking is important.

Reflections on Teaching
- Preparation time is often underestimated.
- Teaching is repetitive.
- Teaching takes practice and repetition can make you better.
- Teaching is exhausting if you are really working at it. That’s why a busy shift at the Reference Desk can leave you tired. You’re teaching the whole time with barely time to catch your breath.
- What works with one age group often works with another.
- A student can be successful without using the library.
- Today’s students are less forgiving. They believe that the computer systems should do it all.
- Competencies measure the short-term. We are here for the long-term.

Advice
- Encourage reiterative contacts with students after you’ve taught a session. Hang around after the class and encourage the use of e-mail.
- If you are using a computer lab setting, honor the setting. Let the students do hands-on work.
- Do something interactive every 10 to 15 minutes. Have them write a brief paragraph on their research question. Ask a question and elicit answers. Let them do a search. Use a worksheet.
- Teach evaluation, not just the mechanics.