Expanding our Roles: Embedded in Curriculum Design
Gisela Butera, MLIS, Alexandra Gomes, MLS, MT, Thomas Harrod, Seema Kakar, MD, Julia Frank, MD, Jennifer Owens, BA
The George Washington University, Himmelfarb Health Sciences Library

Introduction

- GW Himmelfarb Health Sciences librarians collaborated with medical faculty and staff as part of a team revising the Problem Oriented Case-Based Learning (PCL) cases for 1st and 2nd year medical students.
- The collaboration resulted in streamlining the PCL cases, introducing standardized patients and instructional videos incorporating innovative teaching techniques and creating effective simulated patient case scenarios.
- As the PCL cases evolved, a core team developed an IRB approved research study based on a 2nd year PCL Case on sexual reproduction and abortion. The experience provided opportunities for qualitative and quantitative research as well as subsequent publishing.

Background

- HISTORY: For the past 13 years, GW Himmelfarb Health Sciences Librarians have been embedded in the 1st year PCL course. Faculty librarians, along with a medical tutor teach in small groups comprised of 10-12 students.
- LIBRARIANS’ PCL ROLE: Embedded librarians are responsible for delivering medical informatics, and instruction on how to locate EBM resources. Due to staffing constraints, librarians do not teach PCL 2nd year courses.
- NEW OPPORTUNITIES: PCL Director requested help in revising PCL Cases. The experience provided librarians an opportunity to expand their role and become an integral partner to designing PCL Cases.

Methods & Results

- PCL 1st Year: PCL Director contacted the Library to help revise PCL cases for second-year problem-based learning course
- Worked closely with medical faculty to help update content, medical literature and navigate copyright issues
- Continued revising 2nd year PCL Cases and expanded the process to revamp the 1st year PCL curriculum
- Added contextual psychosocial learning objectives
- Added additional standardized patients to cases as well as instructional videos to enrich the experience of students’ patient interactions

- PCL 2nd Year: Participated in IRB Research Study on students’ experience attending 2nd year PCL Case on sexual reproduction and abortion
- Study included Blackboard Discussion postings allowing students to post anonymously on sensitive issues
- Helped create survey assessment of students’ experience attending a case on abortion

Research

- IRB RESEARCH STUDY: The team collaborated in conducting an IRB-approved research study evaluating the case effectiveness and students’ learning outcomes in the PCL curriculum case on abortion and sexual reproduction.

Conclusion

- Working within a multi-disciplinary collaborative team on curriculum development allows for librarians to move beyond the traditional role of instruction. The embedded role highlights the additional contributions librarians can make to the team in the areas of technology and research.