The Embedded Librarian: Engagement is Key

Barbara Opar, Librarian for Architecture  
Syracuse University Libraries
Synopsis

• The successful embedded librarian must be truly engaged in both the discipline and the department(s) served.

• But what does “embedded” mean? It is different at different institutions.

• I will briefly address what embedded means in terms of my role as Architecture Librarian at Syracuse where I am a solo librarian overseeing a reserve book unit, providing reference help, and developing the collection for both the ARR and the Libraries in general.

• Events like the student book club and our Materials Focus sessions are key to showing engagement.

• So what are the benefits for all parties in terms of being embedded? Is there a down side? This brief overview of my role at Syracuse will include thoughts about the pluses- mostly- and a few negatives.
The Facility

The Architecture Reading Room is not a full branch library but instead provides core resources.

- **Resources**
  - Course reserves
  - Core architecture books including reference titles
  - Current periodical titles
  - Select bound periodicals
  - Working drawings
  - Material samples
  - New books

- **Services**
  - Academic Year Hours
    - Mon-Thurs: 9am-11pm
    - Friday: 9am-6pm
    - Sat.: 10am-6pm
    - Sun.: 10am-11pm
  - Three scanners
  - Computers
    - Library catalog
    - Library databases
    - Microsoft office
    - Adobe creative suite
    - CSI Masterspec software
  - Photocopiers
  - Study space
Staffing

• Architecture librarian
  • Reference assistance
  • Instruction

• Student assistants (ca 145 hours a week)
  • Circulation and basic library operations
  • Faculty assistance
  • Scanning

• Special projects
  • Working drawings
  • Materials collection
  • Slide digitization
  • Adding works to our institutional repository
  • Outreach events
Librarian duties

• Reference assistance in architecture and French
• Collection development for architecture and French
• Oversight of ARR operations including
  • Circulation
  • Student tasks
  • Student projects
• Instruction including one on one consultations
• Faculty assistance with course preparation
Embedded= engagement

• Positives
  • Integrated into the teaching mission
  • Ease of access for both parties
  • Become part of the infrastructure
  • Read in, in the loop, in the know about:
    • Courses
    • Academic planning
    • School culture
  • Included in school activities like retreats
  • Access to:
    • School shared drive
    • Email lists
    • Resources
  • Support for activities and events
ARR Resources
Samples Collection
Working Drawing Collection
Materials Focus

HENDRICK MANUFACTURING

TUESDAY, APRIL 01
11AM - 12PM
3RD FLOOR ATRIUM / VENDOR CONVERSATION AT 10:30 AND 1:30

REFRESHMENTS

CES CREDIT
OPEN TO STUDENTS / FACULTY / ALUMNI

ARCHITECTURAL WALL SYSTEMS

NYC-based Sky Walls
dates an innovative approach to architectural wall systems. Come hear the presentation and learn more about their material process.

Architecture Reading Room
Materials Collection
Information Session

SLOQUM RM 202

11:00 - 12:00
Embedded = engagement

• Issues
  • May become too close to certain issues to be impartial
  • Little down time; always on and must be accessible
  • Obligation to attend events

• Summary
  • Not for a novice
  • Experience and ready knowledge of resources is essential

• Hot off the press
  • Funding for renovation received