As a non-tenure track lecturer in the English department, Juanita spends all her time teaching and does not have the same access to resources as faculty within her department. She has a diverse background and had a number of different careers before becoming a lecturer about two years ago. Though she does not get paid that well, she really enjoys teaching because she likes to see students grow and continue her own learning.

One of Juanita’s regular courses is an undergraduate persuasive writing workshop. The course topic changes every term based on student interest. This term, Juanita selected food issues (production, security, policy, etc.) because it is an interest she shares with the students and an area she has already done a little research in.

To prepare for her course, Juanita sets out to update her course syllabus over the summer. The structure is generally the same, but because the topic has changed, she will need to find new resources. Juanita is very comfortable on the web and does a lot of research on the web from home using Google, Amazon, various news sites such as The New York Times and individual author websites and blogs. She is primarily looking for articles and books on the “current argument” around food issues from multiple different perspectives as well as strong examples of persuasive writing.

She starts her search with browser bookmarks she has previously created in this area. She creates dozens of new bookmarks for relevant content, struggling to keep them organized in the various folders she has created. She also gets frustrated when she starts working on campus more as it gets closer to the start of the semester and she does not have access to her bookmarks from home. She ends up emailing work back and forth to herself to narrow down resources to include in her syllabus. She knows a service such as Delicious would help to alleviate this issue, but she just does not have time to move all her bookmarks over and reorganize them.

Juanita cuts and pastes her syllabus from Word into the Sakai Syllabus tool so it is easier for students to quickly click on all the web links. The syllabus consists mainly of links to web articles to read and reference as well as references to PDF readings uploaded in the Resources area of the course site.

Once the semester begins, Juanita diligently keeps up with the blogs and news sites that she’s bookmarked for new work. If she finds something relevant to the class because it argues a new position well or does a good job expounding on an existing argument she will send it to students using the Sakai Announcements tool. It’s sometimes difficult for Juanita to gauge the impact of these supplementary articles because there is no formal way to get feedback on them.

Juanita believes strongly in feedback throughout the course to ensure her students are becoming better writers. Juanita meets with students one-on-one to review three key writing assignments over the course of the semester. She likes speaking with students about their writing and getting feedback on the course. If students are having trouble finding resources for their particular writing assignment, Juanita will set aside time to find resources that may be of use to them. She also points students to the library though she herself is not well versed in scholarly research or very aware of the library’s various resources and services.

Juanita Colás
27 years old
Lecturer in English, 2 years teaching

“I’m looking for practical content my students can use as references and examples to increase the quality of their work.”

Goals
Engage students to become better writers. Juanita is focused on getting students to practice and develop strong practical skills.

Work with students one-on-one. Juanita knows one-on-one interactions enable the feedback needed to get the most learning and growth.

Continue learning. Juanita has many diverse interests and selects course topics that interest both her students and herself.
As an Assistant Professor in Electrical Engineering, Vijay spends about 25% of his time teaching and the rest doing research. He is a relatively new faculty member, has a lot of ideas he is proud of and wants to share them with his colleagues. His recent proposal for a new undergraduate class in Sustainable Semiconductor Systems (SSS) was approved and the department actually wants him to also offer a graduate course on the same topic. Vijay is happy to step up to the challenge on top of an already rather packed fall schedule.

Vijay did some graduate work in SSS, but needs to develop new teaching resources. He aims to get all his preparatory work done during the summer before the fall semester so he can then focus on research and simply conducting the course.

To build resources for his courses, Vijay starts with the approved curricular goals and his two different audiences in mind: mid-level undergraduates and graduate students. The graduate course will discuss journal articles weekly while the undergraduate course will have a textbook, problem sets and one or two journal articles to discuss. Vijay really wants this material to come alive for his students and plans to take a first stab at integrating current news and media such as videos and images into his courses.

To find the textbook for the undergrads, Vijay turns to the little library he has started in his office. He worked with pioneers in this area and has their textbooks. He knows SSS is an emerging, changing field and wants the undergrads to get a solid foundation that is relatively easy to understand instead of delving into details.

To find journal articles, Vijay turns to some of his favorite scholarly databases including IEEE Xplore and ISI Web of Science. He spends a number of hours at a time planning topics to cover in the course and searching for journal articles that fit the topics. He wants to quickly bring his grad students into SSS and then analyze some very interesting, albeit complex, applications that they may apply to their current and future work.

Though he is a rather advanced researcher, he uses simple keyword or author searches when looking for papers. He looks for seminal works as well as those that are more recent. When he finds an interesting article, he browses the abstract and skims the full-text PDF for strong diagrams and charts. He gets frustrated when full-text PDFs are not available because they are so easy to save and share. He gets even more frustrated when he has to click through a number of irrelevant screens to discover that there is no full-text available. He saves PDFs he will use in a folder on his desktop to later upload to Sakai.

As the fall semester starts, Vijay finds himself working on the weekends to put together lecture slides and include current news and multimedia. He is also traveling to a number of conferences throughout the semester. He likes to connect with colleagues and often hears great ideas and sees great visuals that he incorporates into class. He is new to searching YouTube, Wikipedia, WikiMedia and Google Images and it can take him a very long time to find something that will only be used for seconds in class. Although he is well versed in searching scholarly databases in his field, he has difficulty navigating the library’s website to find more popular content, like a licensed article from Time Magazine. Vijay does not hesitate, however, to ask for help and delegate resource-finding missions to his departmental librarian.

Vijay Ramakrishnan
31 years old
Assistant Professor in Electrical Engineering
4 years teaching

“I want my colleagues to respect my work and my students to get excited about my field.”

Goals
Innovate in my field. Vijay is a young, bright and active scholar with a lot of new ideas for his field.

Incite a passion for my field in my students. Vijay is very excited about his field and wants to share that passion with his students.

Advance my career. Vijay conscientiously prioritizes his research, engaging with the scholarly community through conferences and publishing and securing grants.

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Cynthia Altstetter
60 years old
Professor in History, 27 years teaching

“Students don’t appreciate scholarly research and learning like they used to. I wonder how technology can help...”

Goals
Set students on a path. Cynthia aims to help students build connections and spot holes in scholarship, not just memorize facts.

Get students to value scholarly research & learning. Cynthia wants students to understand the point of scholarly research as a collaborative social scene.

Stay curious. Cynthia tends to think of any and all experiences as learning opportunities and is continuously trying to find connections around her.

Twenty-seven years ago, after finishing her PhD., Cynthia started teaching at her old alma mater and is now a tenured professor there. As a very skilled researcher she knows her discipline very well; once her favorite librarian showed her how to get the most of JSTOR, she has become really proficient at finding electronic resources. What she loves about JSTOR is seeing the original document’s context in PDFs. Context is key to most historians work and it is frustrating when full-text is made available in edited formats or in HTML only. These edited formats also tend to ignore pagination, a key concept for citing others’ ideas that students (and some faculty!) are letting go of.

Periodically, she enjoys taking a stroll over to the library to browse books in her area of the stacks. In fact, the last time she was in the library, she spent hours pouring over a trove of recently discovered books and found two additional things that she could add to her course.

Being fully tenured, Cynthia has had the luxury of selecting which courses she would like to teach. Having taught Medieval European History for many years, her course preparation is pretty straightforward. Because the course content is standard fare, she is able to reuse a lot of existing references and will occasionally augment it when she happens upon something new and relevant.

Her students sometimes frustrate her with their attitudes towards learning; many see it as a means to an ends – getting good grades to get into a good graduate school. During her lectures, she really tries to drive home the importance of research and developing critical thinking skills about their readings. Many of them think that they can do ‘just enough’ to get through the class. Cynthia, however, demands more.

One of the ways Cynthia tries to make her students more aware of the complexities of research is having a librarian come to her class early in the semester as her students are getting ready to start their research papers. The librarian talks to them about search strategies and evaluating resources. The students even get an online research guide as part of the course’s Sakai site that lists useful physical and electronic resources for subjects they are researching.

In the last few years, Cynthia has started to use her Sakai site to post things like her syllabus, readings and to use the course’s wiki. Many of her students were clamoring for it, having used it for most of their other courses. She adopted slowly, but she is enthusiastic about the tools now. After talking to one of her colleagues, she borrowed the idea of incorporating an extra credit assignment where students would post annotated interesting resources to the wiki. She does not quite understand all the buzz about wikis, but she is trying to stay relevant to the younger generation and finding ways to get them excited about the research process and how social it really is.

To that end, she enjoys attending the Brown Bag Lecture Series for Faculty on campus. Apart from connecting with other faculty on campus, she can learn about different pedagogies from new faculty, particularly, incorporating technology. When it comes to technology, she is aware of the fads, but not being one to jump on the bandwagon, she finds it interesting learning how her peers are incorporating new technologies into their courses.
Ronald Moore
49 years old
Clinical Professor in Government Affairs
2 years teaching

“Learning is life-long and students need skills and means to continue past graduation.”

Goals
Ensure access in any situation. Ron needs a way to deliver course content in situations where Internet access is not always available.

Promote life-long learning. Ron tries to develop skills that will allow students to become “fishers of their own knowledge.”

Develop multi-disciplinary thinking. Ron exposes students to material that demonstrates problem solving from multiple perspectives.

After a rewarding career in a Washington D.C. government agency, Ron was seeking change and when the opportunity to become faculty in distance education presented itself, he jumped at the chance. With his appointment being billed as 50% research, he figured that he would finally have the time to work on the book he has always wanted to write.

Because of the nature of the distance learning program, Ron relies heavily on digital material and content must be available whenever his students are ready to access it. To deliver course lectures, he records PowerPoint slides synced with voice. Ron wants to stay current and keep his students abreast of the latest developments, but updating his slides at the beginning of the semester is a large and complicated task. As he makes changes to slides, Ron works with the library’s instructional designers to help him get new audio added to the existing lectures.

Ron has great visions for using technology in learning and collaborates with the library’s instructional designers to create innovative new tools. He has worked with the library’s instructional designers to develop an interactive Flash syllabus for his course that acts as a map connecting the various learning objectives, activities and resources for the course.

Between the difficulties in managing online grading and online ‘classrooms’ Ron spends closer to 75% of his time on teaching and the remainder of his time on administrative commitments. One of his major challenges is finding readings to augment his course. Keeping up with his former mentors and networking at conferences allows him to stay abreast of key topics/issues in his field and often supplies him with resources that he can incorporate into the classroom. Ron has no qualms in using non-traditional sources like Department of Defense policies to demonstrate concepts. Ron finds that often these types of electronic resources are better at explaining and applying concepts and make the learning experience more salient. Once he finds a valuable document or article, Ron will go through the PDF document and bookmark the relevant sections to reduce his students’ load – frequently they are working full time in addition to attending classes.

In addition to using real world resources like the Congressional Quarterly Budget Tracker, Ron also requires his students to visit the library – virtually, of course. Although Ron has a library controlled module embedded in his CMS, many of his students use the course web page developed by the librarian. He’s also informally polled his students and most of them prefer to contact the librarians via virtual reference, usually chat.

Ron has his students use the library specifically for a major article review assignment. Students not only have to review the articles but construct arguments with supporting peer-reviewed documents. Given his library’s vast collection of online resources, Ron really appreciates how easy it is for his distance learners to connect with the library and quality resources.

Ron frequently works with the librarian assigned to his course for his own research. He will record citations as he reads industry publications, but not know how to find them through his library. He consults his librarian often to track down these articles.

Personas Library & Sakai 3 Integration Project