

## Wierzbowski, Kenneth

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**From:** Norcia, Megan  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 6, 2016 1:48 PM  
**To:** Smathers, Jennifer; Orzech, Mary Jo  
**Cc:** Wierzbowski, Kenneth; Breitkopf, Mia  
**Subject:** Praise for librarians

Hi, Jennifer!

I hope this finds you well! As the semester draws to a close, I have been reflecting on the excellent support I've had in my classes from librarians this semester. In my Business Writing course, the final assignment called on students to work in teams and devise a new toy for our class company Kid Korps. Students wrote up proposals for their toys and are presenting the results this week. After selecting a toy, they had to research competitors (learning about their profit margins and marketing outlets) using business databases and resources identified by **Mia Breitkopf**. Mia and I emailed and met over the summer and early fall to plan the assignment and her input was vital in helping me break down the assignments and the research I wanted students to do. She selected appropriate resources and scaled them so that students were not overwhelmed. In the research sessions, Mia's pedagogical approach was quite simply \*stellar\*. Mia brought not only knowledge but accessibility through her approachable, friendly, candid manner. She engaged the students in active learning, had them building consensus knowledge and demonstrating their search findings, and most importantly gave them confidence in using the resources. She paused for questions and feedback and prioritized student learning, ensuring that no one was left behind as we conducted our searches. After one session, I heard the students whispering with incredulous glee that this was a great session and that they were planning to use the CIA World Factbook for another class assignment. This was thrilling. It is amazing to see students empowered with the tools they need to navigate information resources throughout their academic career.

The next step in the assignment involved the students visiting the Makerspace where **Ken Wierzbowski** helped students search the thingiverse and experiment with LEGO software to create and design their chosen toy. Ken and his student Evan gave students a tour, demonstrating the 3D printer, laser cutter, and 3D scanner, as well as the tools used in the printing, and some of the finished products. Ken not only presented students with the tools they would be using, but he gestured to the broader context of 3D printing so that students would understand its uses as they apply to hobbyists but also scientists printing human tissue and artists making models. Given the news this week that Amazon is opening its own 3D printing shop, this is critical in placing Brockport students at the cutting edge of progress. Ken then took students down to the Kiefer Room and introduced them to the thingiverse database of objects, helped them search, and counseled them about best practices for size and color when ordering. He also took a group upstairs to show them the more intricate LEGO software to create models from virtual bricks. When I was planning the assignment, I consulted with Ken and his input helped me shape the assignment and gave my students these multiple options for creating their toys. This enabled them to take ownership of the assignment and invest themselves in it as a team. Ken brought the same approachability, enthusiasm, and expertise to our class session that he had brought to my course last year when I brought English students to the Makerspace. Our collaboration there resulted in presentations to Mornings with the Professors and CELT where Ken was an ambassador for this technology. We're also working on an article together about this experience.

In short (though I've gone on very long now), I feel so lucky to work at a place where such talented, engaged, approachable librarians like Mia and Ken are. They not only became true collaborators with their advice, wisdom, and input, but they empowered the students and energized them by showing them how they could find the information they needed to complete the coursework. Their instruction will go with students long after this semester is finished. I am so grateful for their service and expertise.

Meg:)

PS-- Students are finishing up their presentations on Wednesday (3:35-4:50pm in LAB 106B) if you'd like to join us to see the results of their research. I am so proud of all they've accomplished with help from the library!

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