Michael Demsky (Departmental Support - Biology)

"They call me 'Lab Mom' because I take care of everyone."

Background

Age: 43
Occupation: Departmental Administrative Support - Biology
School: Faculty of Sciences, University of TBD
Technology level: Tech-savvy

Main Points

- Handles administrative aspects of the courses
- Good at keeping his professors, TAs, and students organized
- Helpful, conscientious and enjoys taking care of people
- Comfortable with technology

Goals

- Know what is happening in the department, particularly if it affects his work
- Be a good "lab mom"
- Ensure students are in the right classes
- Do a good job for faculty and be respected by them
- Spend time with his family
- Have fun

Frustrations & Pain Points

- Michael's big frustrations with the LMS is the performance and that he doesn't automatically have access to student rosters. He often needs to refer to rosters. It requires instructors giving him some special sort of access -- more than just Department Delegate.
- He can't use the browser Back button. "I can't use back. I have to remember that"
- He uploads lab manuals to his own site, and faculty and students have to go outside of the LMS course site to get the material.
- He occasionally gets frustrated by poor planning on the part of the professors. They might stop by the lab equipment room (his office) and

expect Michael to drop everything to help get ready for a class later that day. His latest frustration was when all 40 students in a class needed lab equipment for independent research projects but no one told him until the day before so there wasn't enough equipment to go around.

Scenarios

- TBD

Michael has been at Ohio State since he graduated 16 years ago. He was a Zoology major and enjoys being involved with the Biology Department. His wife also works on campus so they try to have lunch together at least once a month.

His job is instructional support, which means doing anything profs need him to do to make their courses run smoothly. He does everything from managing equipment in the labs, including training faculty and students on the equipment to posting course material to course sites to entering student grades for faculty. With 28 faculty in the department he finds himself posting course content on a regular basis. Only half the faculty take advantage of the support he offers and of those less than a dozen ask for assistance on regular basis but they keep him pretty busy. One instructor never posts anything himself to his course site, and others just ask for help with something tricky like posting a large image file (that requires compression) or converting a ppt to a pdf.

Michael says his "job is pretty darn fun." It's pretty low stress and sometimes he gets to go on fun shopping trips like driving to Bodega Bay to get sea water for labs. He also meets interesting professors, and sees "neat stuff" like hummingbirds in wind tunnels, cockroaches, etc. He also likes that no 2 days are ever the same. You never know who will stop by to see him on a given day, especially since he shares his office with 2 colleagues.

He's pretty savvy with the computer but sees it as a means to end. It helps him stay organized and efficiently share material with students and faculty. He orders most of the lab equipment online these days. He also created a project site for the Bio Instructional Staff to share material like schedules and lab protocols amongst themselves. He even uses the campus LMS for a project site he shares with fellow "gamers."

Scenarios

- **Send out announcement:** Send an announcement to all the students in the appropriate lab sections about changes made to the labs.
- **Manage lab enrollment:** Make sure students have taken prerequisites and have signed up for the required lecture for their lab. This can be a real nightmare since lectures can have 300+ students that need assigned to labs.
- **Upload lab manuals online and keep them up to date:** Put lab manuals online and point faculty and students to *his* own website by linking to it from the course site. He also puts any new materials on the course sites.