Faculty Can't Spare The Class Time?
Go Self-Paced!

Meet the multidisciplinary committee responsible for creating the self-paced online tutorial: (From Left) Kristin Bernet, Erin Hagar, Eileen McGurty, Sharon Morris, Steven Stich, and Chella Vaidyanathan

Ever heard the lament from faculty “We would love our students to do better research but we can’t spare the class time?” The objective of this poster session is to share the analysis of the challenges, successes and lessons learned collaborating to develop a multi-media self-paced tutorial for graduate students in a part-time Master’s degree program. By completing the required tutorial on their own time prior to the start of classes, students learned to search academic literature, evaluate various sources of information and use APA citation style to document research.

The tutorial was developed using SoftChalk software to provide a higher degree of interactivity in the lessons. The tutorial also included a graded assessment in which students needed to answer correctly at least 80% of the tutorial questions and complete a survey designed to gather feedback. The tutorial, residing in Blackboard, consisted of seven lessons. Incorporating multi-media, most lessons contained embedded videos, screen shots and an interactive task. A self-check quiz was also included. The average time needed to take the tutorial was estimated to be six hours.

As part of the analysis we surveyed and followed-up with telephone interviews to try to determine if the learning objectives were achieved, what students learned and more about the user experience –how did students approach the tutorial and what did students think about it? Is a self-paced online tutorial an effective tool for learning/reviewing research skills? If we offer this tool, how can we seek to improve it?

For more information, please see our webpage at [http://sn.im/jhuposter](http://sn.im/jhuposter) or contact us at [washrocklibraries@jhu.edu](mailto:washrocklibraries@jhu.edu).
Faculty Can’t Spare The Class Time For Library Instruction? Create A Multi-media Self-paced Tutorial!
Kristin Bernet, Erin Hagar, Eileen McGurty, Sharon Morris, Stephen Stich, Chella Vaidyanathan

The Challenge
The Program Director for the part-time Master of Science in Environmental Sciences and Policy degree came to us with a challenge: “We would love our students to learn to do better research but we can’t spare the class time.”

Could we develop a self-paced online tutorial since face-to-face time was not an option?

Why the need?
• Faculty were finding that student research skills were not consistently at an acceptable level for graduate studies
• Students “believe” everything can be found on Google
• Class time is limited and students need to be prepared to do scholarly research from day one

Would busy non-traditional graduate students make time to learn about library research skills?

What’s In This Thing?
Seven lessons incorporating multi-media, embedded videos, numerous screen shots and an interactive self-check task.

A final assessment quiz was included to check overall knowledge of the concepts presented in the tutorial.

The specific lessons:
• Distinguishing scholarly from popular resources
• Finding articles and the use of Boolean operators
• Conducting a cited Reference Search
• Finding the full-text of a known article using SFX & Google Scholar
• Discovering Books, Encyclopedias, and University Press Publications
• Evaluating sources found on the Internet
• Citing sources and formatting papers in APA style

An example of an interactive component from the tutorial on distinguishing scholarly from popular resources:

Building It
A team was assembled and met regularly for three months to decide upon content, platform, design and to implement and assess the tutorial.

Significant decisions:
• The multidisciplinary team consisted of:
  • Two librarian liaisons serving the part-time graduate programs with emphasis on distance education
  • Program Director for Graduate Programs in Environmental Studies
  • Librarian subject specialist in Environmental Sciences
  • Instructional Designer
  • Humanities librarian to bring a different perspective
• Communication via in-person and teleconference meetings, and a wiki space to discuss, communicate and collaborate to create and edit content
• Software decision based on the university-wide license for Blackboard as the Course Management platform
• Choose to use with Blackboard to make lessons interactive and allow for greater customization

What Students Told Us
Prior to the start of the semester, 43 students received notice of the availability of the tutorial. Of those notified, 25 students opted to participate. After the semester had ended and within the guidelines of the institutional review board (IRB), 8 students were interviewed.

Using a survey embedded in the tutorial and follow-up individual telephone interviews to understand the user experience, students told us:

What’s Next?
• Conduct detailed analysis of feedback and the development of “user stories”
• Improve the user experience
  • Make navigation and structure more flexible and intuitive
  • Investigate the use of a pre-assessment or “Test-out” option which will direct students to the needed lessons
  • Provide a better description of what is covered in each lesson
  • Provide an estimated time commitment for each lesson
• Collaborate with faculty to develop methods to determine if student research is improving after taking the tutorial
• Evaluate new changes with the next cohort of students
• Integrate sections of the tutorial into other instructional activities

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