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Extending Our Reach: Enhanced Library Instruction in a Community College

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Abstract: *We describe working with our psychology instructors to provide Information Literacy (IL) support in the introductory course. This process has been incorporated into the campus Quality Enhancement Plan, required by regional accrediting agencies. We provide details on creating an appropriate assignment to assess IL instruction, what we do in seated classes, and what we offer distance education students of the course, such as e-versions of handouts, video tutorials on using essential databases, and Lib Guides.*

What We Need

Laurie Kutner and Alison Armstrong, both at the University of Vermont, articulate a number of issues in their piece, *Rethinking Information Literacy in a Globalized World*, that serve as a good basis for discussing librarians' new roles. They introduce their topic by saying:

As higher education grapples with what it means to provide a relevant twenty-first century global learning experience, it is time for librarians to consider our strengths and unique contributions that we bring to this dialog and effort. What is our contributing role as information literacy specialists and educators within this larger context? Our profession has a strong history of engagement with trends in higher education, including demonstrating leadership in the areas of assessment, first-year experience, diversity and information technology, but are we present and relevant as large-scale conversations in higher education continue to evolve to increasingly focus on internationalization and global learning?¹

The remainder of their analysis considers ACRL's initial information literacy (IL) standards in 2000. A year after their article, the standards were being revamped. Perhaps Kutner and Armstrong found some of their critique mooted by that process. Nonetheless,

without discussing the details they brought forth or the insightful points made in their article, we can say the fundamental questions they raise are still germane. In fact, IL (and library instruction generally) has become so integral to our contribution as librarians, and especially so for those of us in academic settings, that it constitutes a vital part of our professional *personae*. As evidence of this, even memos from the ACRL task force are scrutinized by our peers (see, for example, Banks,² Harris³).

So, what do we mean when we talk about "what we need" in this context? Traditionally, clear objectives and their corollary methods sufficed to define the process. Rigid though they may have been, these guidelines acted as premises to undergird our pedagogy and thereby defined our role in the area of IL. Now, of course, that degree of detail is actually insufficient. New standards should not convey merely the acceptable steps of a process, but must be a springboard into an inscrutable future. That is, they must contain enough flexibility and vision to allow us, as practitioners, to formulate approaches by which our students (and other library users) can appreciate "global learning" and the pursuit of lifelong learning. It is from this beginning that we sought to extend the reach of our library.

Where We Started

Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC) is located in the foothills of the North Carolina Blue Ridge Mountains with a service area that includes Catawba and Alexander counties. We serve a student population of approximately 3,000 full-time students.

Our work with media began with the students. Psychology instructors asked, "What do our students *really* need to gain from the social sciences component of the general education program?" The answer was practical research skills. As a result, the learning outcomes for all psychology courses were revised. General Education Outcome 1 was created specifically for the Psychology 150 (the introductory course) partnership and speaks to the need

for IL among students in that course. Building on this foundation, a common research assignment for all sections of Psych 150 was created. A new institutional initiative among psychology instructors and librarians was begun in August 2011. Now that librarians were part of the conversation, we were able to help create an evaluative critical thinking/writing assignment for all course sections with an eye to resources readily available to our students. As a collaborative effort, we discussed the level of student learning appropriate for first-year college transfer students. Meetings also included demonstrations of how students could use NC LIVE (a statewide library consortium providing access to digital content from various vendors) to effectively locate studies that met required criteria. With this assignment came the realization that not all students had the foundational research skills necessary to investigate the literature. Inter-departmental meetings were then held and faculty were invited to the Library to see our instructional space.

The first wave of enhanced library instruction began with one faculty member. However, excitement for this approach spread quickly on our campus. Library instruction, specifically how to identify appropriate research from peer-reviewed journals using NC LIVE, has expanded to all full-time psychology instructors and almost all adjunct psychology instructors.

What We Did

We initially concentrated on face-to-face instruction. Each full-time instructor offered a librarian 50 minutes of his/her class time. The common assignment requires three academic articles, and NC LIVE is our best resource to meet this need. Therefore, our class time was spent teaching students how to navigate NC LIVE generally, and EBSCO's Academic Search Complete in particular. As we progressed, we realized there were students who had yet to receive the same level of NC LIVE instruction and research support. The Library was presented with a need to reach out to students taking the course via distance education. Staci created modules and tutorials using Jing to demonstrate how to execute NC LIVE searches. These modules were loaded into Blackboard, our learning management system. Distance students now had digital access to similar instruction as seated students.

At this point, we were visiting seated classes for face-to-face NC LIVE instruction, as well as creating tutorials for online students. But we realized a 'one-shot' NC LIVE session was not going to meet the need for all seated students. It is now generally accepted instructional practice that students need multiple exposures to feel comfortable with certain topics and skills.

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Staci Wilson

Staci Wilson received her MLS in 2006. She began work at Catawba Valley Community College in 2004. During her time at CVCC, she has worked as Circulation Specialist, Reference Librarian, and, since 2009, Director of Library Services. As Reference Librarian and Library Director, Staci has worked to advance and innovate campus Library Instruction offerings and methodology. Other on-campus involvement includes participation as a CVCC Phillips Leadership Academy Fellow and membership on the campus Professional Development Committee. Staci is active on the Board of the North Carolina Community College Learning Resources Association and is currently serving as a Director-At-Large for the Community and Junior College Libraries Section of the North Carolina Library Association.

Distance students were able to view/review tutorials as needed. Seated classes did not have that option at the outset. All courses at CVCC are Web-enhanced, meaning that even seated courses have a Blackboard component available. Upon realizing this disparity, our answer was simple: embed videos in Web-enhanced courses using the model in place for online courses.

Using Jing again, **Staci** also created an introductory video that introduces the embedded librarian, lets students see a face, and reiterates librarian availability and willingness to assist. A series of handouts and modules were created. The handouts gave basic research tips and explained how to evaluate research articles, while the videos were more specific, explaining how to log into and search NC LIVE, and use tools essential to the databases available (e.g., creating folders, emailing, and saving articles).

The next step was to review the videos for their content and ensure they complied with the *Americans with Disabilities Act*. Further, for students who could not meet face-to-face, the chat feature in Blackboard was used to communicate.

Over the past two years, we provided two categories of instruction that can be considered “enhanced” compared to our earlier techniques: face-to-face seated classes (primarily in psychology and English) and embedding a librarian via the learning management system in distance education courses (mainly psychology, history, and nursing). During calendar year (CY) 2012, we presented 26 classes; that number jumped to 60 for CY 2013. On average, each seated class has 28 students. So, for 2012, we met with 533 students and 1,740 last year. CVCC’s distance education classes generally have a comparable enrollment with seated sections. For the Fall and Spring Semesters of 2013 (the first year), **Staci** was embedded in 22 classes. To this point in 2014, she has participated with 11 classes.

What We Learned

Considering our experience over the past two years, we drew six conclusions: three positive, and three less so. The “pros” are: Meeting students “where they are” — whether virtually or in person. The techniques and technology we used had the potential to reach students who, up to that point, may not have been inclined to use the library or consider its services as integral to their studies. Instruction can be tailored to specific courses and sections, topics, and even assignments; and our newer approach has shown itself to be more effective than the traditional “stand-alone” one of demonstrating features without connecting this knowledge to related assignments.

There were challenges: First, creating effective instructional modules can be time-consuming. Also, additional effort is needed to review both the modules we create and those offered by vendors. However, we found this instructional process to be a natural extension of our traditional role — one that is well-suited

Ari Sigal

Ari Sigal received his MLS in 1985 and has worked in public, academic, and special libraries. Since 2004, he has worked for **Catawba Valley Community College**, Hickory, NC as Library Director (to 2009) and Director of the Accessing Scholarly Knowledge Program (2009-2014), an innovative service that combined traditional reference and master’s/doctoral degree assistance for CVCC faculty/staff and the community. He currently provides reference and instruction services and is the Curator of the Gilde-Marx Collection for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, one of the largest of its kind in North Carolina. **Ari** has periodically been an adjunct instructor for the MLS program at **Appalachian State University, Boone**. He is recently editor of the **IGI Global** title, *Advancing Library Education: Technological Innovation and Instructional Design*. 🌿

to advance critical thinking, information literacy, as well as mesh with current staff realities. Lastly, there is little or no face-to-face contact with students enrolled in fully online (as opposed to hybrid) classes. In our view, though, the positives far outweigh the negatives, as the following representative comments show:

I never thanked you adequately for the wonderful job you did with my PSY 150 students last semester to get them going in reviewing a scientific journal.

The difference in quality in the work I received from first semester (without your help) and second (with it) was dramatic (*from a faculty member*).

Just wanted to stop by and say thank you for all of your help with my Psychology articles. I scored a 100%. Thanks again. Your time is valued and your help was greatly appreciated! (*from a student*).

We saw for ourselves that “embedded librarianship” is indeed a powerful tool for conveying library training to off-campus students and improved the quality of their coursework. **Staci’s** digital presence in the learning management software shows students the importance of IL in facilitating the research process. (An excellent first-hand account of this experience, illustrating the benefits of a librarian’s online teaching presence, is given by **Nancy Weissman, Cuyahoga Community College**, and **Karen Swan** of the **University of Illinois/Springfield**.)

Finally, we witnessed the progress that can come from librarian-faculty collaboration. When faculty acknowledge the role librarians can play in enhancing students’ ability to access information and come to consider library instruction as an enhancement to their classes, much can be accomplished. As **Dianne VanderPol** and **Emily Swanson**, both at **Westminster College**, conclude: “The future of information literacy will be multi-faceted. Faculty see students struggle to produce well-researched and well-reasoned papers and projects, so they ... are willing to share responsibility to develop students’ information literacy.”⁵ Using Blackboard as a vehicle for IL dramatically increased the library’s relevance as a research resource for students, and the videos that were created for this purpose received an enthusiastic response from both students and faculty.

What Is Next

What are we planning to do in the future? Our main objective now is to consider the macro (that is, the campus) level for module

use rather than the micro (i.e., specific courses) to address student needs regardless of location. To this end, CVCC has agreed to purchase digital IL course modules. A cross-disciplinary approach such as this provides obvious benefits and creates time to customize training materials. Looking at the larger picture of IL also dovetails well into the second 10-year quality enhancement plan for the campus. The current focus pairs IL and critical thinking in hopes that this melding can improve student learning outcomes. We are eager to see many courses implement these modules, as our experience shows that exposure to library instruction over time does impact student understanding. We plan to continue to embed a librarian in various courses as a means of overcoming the barrier of distance in online instruction. Here are a few other items we will be alert to going forth:

- a) maintaining ADA compliance,
- b) staying current with changes to the databases we use,
- c) being present in as many virtual and in-person classes as possible, and
- d) making sure students are aware of their options for help and of our availability.

Ultimately, students have been the winners in this process. Working with faculty (and administration) in a meaningful, vital way has brought significant changes to how we deliver instruction, as well as how students and faculty view our role in the learning process. “And that,” as **Robert Frost** wrote, “has made all the difference.”

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kanopystreaming.com) has introduced a model that supports this, as well as the more standard licensing models.

According to the “About Us” page, **Kanopy** provides a curated, online video platform with over 25,000 individual videos from well-known educational filmmakers and production houses. Once the platform is in place, **Kanopy** adds videos to the institutions platform in three ways — via their browseable catalog, via a hosting service which allows the institution to upload videos, and through a “search and find” service, where their acquisitions team helps track down a title and the rights available for a subscribing institution (Kanopy “About Us,” 2014).

Kanopy allows libraries to customize their platforms with full collections (1-year or 3-year licensing), individual titles (1-year or 3-year licensing), and/or a patron pay-per-view or patron-driven access (PDA) model. The PDA model allows institutional users to access the **Kanopy Streaming** platform via IP/Proxy. An individual title can have up to four “views” at over 60 seconds before a license is “activated.” Once a license is activated, the library can choose a 1-year license or a 3-year license.

All individual films are given the same price, and price is based on an institution’s FTE. MARC records are accessible through the institution’s administration portal, along with user and access statistics. The institution has access to a dedicated administrative portal, which includes statistics at a very granular level (title usage to time usage). This is particularly helpful when it comes down to renewing a license — all usage can be seen and evaluated to inform the renewal or non-renewal process.

Kanopy also sends out bulk 90-day alerts when a license is about to expire. If a license expires, the patron cannot tell; instead of an option to “watch” the video, the user will be prompted to “request” the video and the license can be reinstated. **Kanopy** also sends alerts if there are any budget perimeters set and they are about to be crossed/denied. This provides an easy-access way to monitor accounts.

For patrons, the system is seamless. They browse, hit play, and watch. They do not know

when a license is activated at the fourth view, but have an option to email acquisitions staff if they choose. If they share a link of the video to their class, the “views” will happen faster, but the institution will only be charged once, even if it is viewed hundreds of times. It is up to the institution to decide what patrons will be able to “browse.” Institutions can control access to subject collections, or they can make the entire catalog available for browsing.

Kanopy Streaming provides access to many well-known and respected educational productions and collections. Subject areas include the arts, humanities, business, education, health, sciences, and media. Some well-known distributors, such as **California Newsreel**, **First Run Features**, and **Document Educational Resources**, are just a few with collections included in **Kanopy** (Kanopy “Supplier Channels,” 2014). Right now, the **Media Education Foundation** collection is not available under the PDA option, but individual titles and collections from the **MEF** can be licensed in 1-year and 3-year intervals. They would still be available on the **Kanopy** platform and licensed content is available alongside the unlicensed content, so the patron is not missing anything when they browse the content. Feature films are also a challenge to institutional licensing, but **Kanopy** is on that path, with a selection of classic Criterion Collection films. It is just a matter of time before feature film distributors look closer at models for institutional licensing.

High statistics in streaming video use is still closely tied with classroom and assignment use. Streaming video systems need to support faculty and students with the tools made available to them.

Once a title is licensed, the **Kanopy** platform includes a playlist and clip-creation tool, which aids faculty and students in creating learning resources. Unique links are created when a video is modified, edited, or made into a playlist. All videos have captions and interactive transcripts, which aid in accessibility and searchability of the video. Permalinks and embed code are available for each title, so videos can be integrated into learning management systems and content management systems. Licensing also covers institutions for public performance; under the agreement, the screening has to be affiliated with the

institution and no charge can be associated to attend the screening. As with all databases and digital platforms, marketing and outreach are still crucial, so patrons know the platform, how it works, and where to find content. **Kanopy** allows for preview viewing, so faculty can get a good sense of the title before any further agreement or access is made.

Ultimately, we are still in a state of unrest with streaming video, but libraries are choosing the items and resources that work best for their patrons. Streaming video is one of the more complicated areas to collect in, but the breadth of content, flexibility of licensing, availability of user tools, and transparency of usage and statistics, makes **Kanopy Streaming** an interesting competitor to other online video vendors, and a worthwhile partner to libraries and institutions.

Additional research from Professor **Julie DeCesare** on “Navigating Multimedia” appears in the **IGI Global** publication, *Enhancing Instruction with Visual Media*.

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