# LSTA – Librarian as Instructional Leader

## Rising Junior Mini-Grant Report

Report for the Winter/Spring Authentic Assessment Mini-Grants Post to your library’s page on <http://informationliteracywactc.pbwiki.com> -- Due June 17, 2011

The purpose of this report is to reflect on your learning and to create a repository of shared ideas and strategies for Washington state community and technical college libraries.

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| **Project Summary** What did you do? (limit to 200 words) |
| We tested four approaches to delivering information literacy instruction to online students. Using a variety of instructional methods we intervened in the research process at four points: early (topic development), early (searching), mid-process (instruction on scholarly materials) and late (librarian review of draft bibliographies). All students had access to a librarian, performed library-related assignments and had access to supplementary materials such as Tegrity videos, libguides, and handouts. The general method included these steps: identifying online instructors with library-related assignments; working with faculty to insert related library instruction , and either developing supplemental assignments or modifying the instructor’s assignment to include the library activity. Librarians and faculty both assessed the impact of the library instruction on the students’ performance. Generally speaking, the early intervention (topic development) had the broadest impact in that the topics were substantial and specific enough to bear research results. The early (searching) and mid-process (instruction on peer-reviewed materials) increased the quality of the information found. The late intervention (review of draft bibliographies) made little difference in the grade assigned, though it increased the number and quality of sources used. |
| **Participants –** Who worked on this project? |
| Librarians: Tria Skirko, Barbara Oldham, Andrew Hersh-Tudor  Faculty: J’Lene George, Rob Fitch, Peter Donahue, Mary McIvor  Class name(s) and approximate number of students involved: Lifespan Development (20), Oceanography 100 (30), English 101 (13 students), Intro to Spreadsheets (15 students) |
| **Learning Outcomes or Project Outcomes** – What did you want the students to be able to do? OR What did you intend to accomplish? |
| Our goal was to identify the point in the research process when it would be most effective to delivery library support to online students. |
| **Curriculum –** What did the students need to know? What content needed to be covered? |
| Students needed to understand the instructor’s assignment; further knowledge requirements depended on the point at which library instruction was delivered. Early intervention students needed to know their idea for research; content covered was how an idea differs from a research topic. Early intervention (searching) students needed to know terms related to their research topic; content covered was how to search for specialized data using appropriate databases, appropriate keywords, and appropriated filters. Mid-point intervention students needed to know their research topic; content covered was core concepts related to peer-reviewed articles and how such articles apply to a research paper. Late intervention students needed to know their thesis statement and where they had gaps in the research completed so far; content covered included sources of additional information and strategies for finding high quality information. |
| **Pedagogy –** What were the setting and learning activities for the students to gain/develop these abilities? |
| Topic Development Instruction: The students were all part of an online class so the content was delivered to them through their existing Angel Classroom. The librarian created a sequential libguide to progress the students through their topic development. The librarian also created a short tegrity video to show students how to use the libguide. Within the libguide were downloadable forms, useful links, and brainstorming worksheets.  Searching Instruction: These students were also in an online class and content was sent to them through their Angel classroom. The librarian created a document and a tegrity video to walk the students through searching for particular types of data.  Instruction on scholarly materials: these students selected and read a peer-reviewed related to their assignment, discussed it with peers and wrote an article critique, summary and APA format citation.  Bibliography-review students provided the librarian with their thesis statement, draft bibliography, assessment of further resources needed, and comments on the supplemental library materials provided to the course. The librarian provided evaluative comments on the materials. The instructor offered the assignment as extra credit, so participating students were self-selected.  In all cases, the librarians had extended interactions with some of the students, that is, some students sought further support from the librarian. |
| **Assessment –** How did you assess your project outcomes? What data did you collect? How well did you meet your outcomes? |
| Topic Development Assessment: Students turned in a questionnaire that asked primarily formative assessment questions. These questions asked the student to lead the librarian through their thought process as they moved from idea to research topic.  Searching Assessment: The librarian asked students to fill out a survey regarding their experiences with the learning tips that were offered to them. The survey allowed for students to rate the document vs. the video as a form of instruction and also to comment on the usefulness of library instruction intervention into their course.  Instruction on scholarly materials: the librarian collected and evaluated 2-3 page article critique papers as described above.  Bibliography-review: the librarian collected the materials described above; once the papers were graded, the instructor provided the final grade and final bibliographies. |
| **Data –** What other data did you collect? |
| In all cases, librarians collected subjective comments from the instructors on the impact of the library instruction. |
| **Best Practices –** What Best Practice would you pass on to other librarians or discipline faculty? What worked well? What would you do differently? |
| Regarding the timing of library instruction, the earlier the instruction the greater the impact. Instruction around core concepts (ideas –vs- research topics; peer-reviewed research; search strategies) had a greater impact than specific evaluative comments on completed research. Finally, students respond well to dynamic, interactive resources they can use themselves, such as videos and web-based library guides. |
| **Key learning –** What’s your observation or reflection on this project? What did you or the faculty member learn from this project? |
| Topic Development: Teaching topic development without moving into the next step quickly is hard, which parallels the student experience as well. Students tend to skip this step and think that a topic will just emerge. Spending time developing a researchable topic here allowed students to feel more success in searching which is powerful support for their information literacy confidence.  Searching: The searching video walked the students through searching for the specific data (really all they needed) but other skills were added as well, such as searching for file type, phrase searching, etc. In the survey there were lots of comments that this was the most helpful thing and that students were excited to use these skills in their next assignment. Key learning: while students are focused on getting just the information they need, they are still willing to learn something additional if they see how they will use it in future assignments.  Instruction on scholarly materials: students who were referred back to the instruction or sought help from the librarian did much better on the revision than those students who did not. Key learning: encouraging post-assignment contact with a librarian seems to improve overall performance.  Bibliography-review: it’s likely that the students who chose to do the extra credit project were the weaker students in the class (per the instructor). Thus, the improved quality of the resources they found, and the help the librarian gave them on filling the information gaps likely pulled their final grades to the same level as the rest of the students in the class. Key learning: even if the incentive for participation in the library assignment is more about the grade than the learning, the instruction has a positive effect. |