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Designing LibGuides as Instructional Tools for Critical Thinking and Effective Online Learning

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Georgia's large-scale, small-feel research university

Designing LibGuides as Instructional Tools for Critical Thinking and Effective Online Learning

Presented by Ruth L. Baker
16th Distance Library Services Conference
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Tools for Online Learners

“...the goal of an online program should be to provide an provide an environment which actively engages students in the learning process and promotes independent learning where students take ownership of their work.”

(Junk, Derider, and Junk, 2011)

What's the Problem?

Information Literacy (IL) Instruction:

- is often delivered as a 'one-shot' session with no specific assignment
- may be too broad-a general orientation or introduction to library resources
- provides limited opportunities for students to practice or demonstrate research skills
- SLOs are difficult to assess --AND--
- what about fully online learners? Do they get the same instruction and services? Is access enough?

IL for Online Learners

LibGuides can be the solution--they are easy-to-maintain platforms to:

- address assignment-level instruction at the point of need
- create scaffolded stand-alone tutorials designed according to key learning theory principles
- meet course goals and objectives
- improve learning outcomes
- promote lifelong habits of critical thinking and deeper learning

What are LibGuides?

“LibGuides is a software application that creates a way to collect knowledge and present information in an organized manner. LibGuides has a tab based structure...boxes and columnscontent in many different formats. Web 2.0 technologies such as RSS feeds, instant messaging widgets, and social networking ...creating a more participatory setting than traditional online guides. ” (Gonzalez & Westbrook, 2010).

Literature Review

Some key themes have emerged around LibGuides and Information Literacy (IL):

- rapid development of subject and course guides
- use of interactive web 2.0 features (video, chat, interactive forms)
- (in)effectiveness of one-shot Information IL instruction in the absence of an assignment or lesson
- questions about how students locate and use guides

[Sources: Watson et al., 2013; Mery et al, 2012; Bryan and Karshmer, 2012; McMullin and Hutton, 2010 ; Robinson and Kim, 2010; Strutin, 2008; Staley, 2007; Reeb and Gibbons, 2004]

Literature Review cont'd

- the need to synchronize IL outcomes with course goals and objectives
- students show a preference for course level guides...particularly at their point of need to know
- need for experiential and collaborative learning
- how LibGuides can promote IL instruction in the online learning environment (this area needs more research)

[Sources:; Watson et al., 2013; Mann et al., 2012; Roberts and Hunter, 2011; Robinson and Kim, 2011; McMullin and Hutton, 2010; Bryan and Karshmer, 2010; Gonzalez and Westbrook, 2010; Morris and Del Bosque, 2010]

LibGuides as Instructional Tools

Pro

- easy to maintain
- no specialized knowledge of HTML or programming
- agile, responsive to change
- interactive, social learning
- Web 2.0 features
- easily embedded or linked to a course management system (CMS)
- cross-platform functionality
- easily adapted with “reusable objects” and templates

Con

- pathfinder roots³
- virtually unlimited space
- “kitchen sink” approach-too many tabs and boxes
- too broad or complex
- difficult to locate
- not designed for instruction

Understanding Guide Users

Millennial Students (born between 1980 and 2000):

- are unlike generations who used pathfinders (60s & 70s) or web-based guides (90s)
- “plugged in” to technology
- multi-taskers
- expect to find answers
- want to avoid wasting time
- have ‘research needs’ rather than research ‘questions’
- show a marked preference for course guides

[Sources: Latham and Gross, 2013; Asher et al., 2013;; Nielsen and Webb, 2011; Foster et al., 2010; Bauerline, 2009]

One Solution

Pilot Project: First-Year Experience Course (FYE 1410)

- Comparison of learning outcomes using
 - pathfinder-type guide
 - tutorial-type (assignment) guide
- Flipped lesson
 - video tutorial and reading outside of class
 - linked to assignment in CMS
 - assignment completed in class directly in the guide
- Follow-up perception survey

Pathfinder-type Guide

Here is a typical pathfinder-type guide but **without** specific guidance for completing an assignment:


ZACH S. HENDERSON LIBRARY

Zach S. Henderson Library » LibGuides Home » Undergraduate Research
Admin Sign In

Undergraduate Research
Tags: basic research, research, undergraduate, undergraduate research

Library resources and services for the undergraduate researcher

Last Updated: Mar 6, 2014 | URL: <http://georgiasouthern.libguides.com/ugr> | [Print Guide](#) | [RSS Updates](#)

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Welcome to the Zach S. Henderson Library!

What Can I Find Here?

We created this LibGuide to assist you as Undergraduate Researchers with information about the Library's resources, and to guide you in beginning your background research and literature review. In this guide, you will find sections (visible as tabs at the top of your screen) that provide information for you on:

- [Library Services](#)
- Using the [Discover@GeorgiaSouthern](#) search tool
- [Evaluating Information](#)
- [Citing Sources](#)

and

- [Locating a Librarian](#) specializing in your subject area to assist you

[Comments \(0\)](#)

Video Tour of the Henderson Library

This video takes you on a tour of all four floors of the building. One change since it was created is that the bound periodicals from 2010 to present are located on the 2nd floor for your convenience. All earlier issues of our bound periodical collection is stored in the Automated Retrieval Collection or ARC.



Second Floor

[Comments \(0\)](#)

Subject Librarian



Lisa P. Smith

Contact Info

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 Office Phone: 912-478-1896
 Information Desk: 912-478-5645
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Links:
[Profile & Guides](#)

Subjects:
[Nursing, Biology](#)

Subject Librarian



Assignment Guide Design

To compare learning outcomes, we also tested an assignment (tutorial) guide, based on these 5 learning principles:

- Scaffolding
- Chunking
- Cognitive Load
- Working memory
- Metacognition

[Sources: Bielat, Befus and Arnold, 2013; Leibiger and Aldrich, 2013; Kirsch, 2005; Reiser, 2004; MacKenzie, 1999; Wood et al., 1976]

Tutorial-type Guide



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ZACH S. HENDERSON LIBRARY

Zach S. Henderson Library » LibGuides Home » Food Sustainability #2 Admin Sign In

Food Sustainability #2

Tutorial guide for food sustainability

Last Updated: Oct 7, 2013 | URL: <http://georgiasouthern.libguides.com/food2> | [Print Guide](#)

[Home](#) | [Comments\(0\)](#) | [Print Page](#)
Search:
This Guide

Introduction

What is Sustainability?

Links to two articles that provide basic background information:

[Definition](#)

[Basic Information](#)

[Comments \(0\)](#)

Search Google Scholar



[Comments \(0\)](#)

Learn to Use Discover-Watch This Video



[Comments \(0\)](#)

Step #1: Read the Assignment

Like the first scenario, you are asked to locate a book and an article. However, with this assignment you will be searching for a book and an article on a specific topic. Choose from the following list of topics:

- nutrition and health
- global food demand
- pest management
- bioengineering
- food production (plant & animals) / eco-efficient
- agro-economics

Format your answers according to [APA Style](#) using a citation management tool (RefWorks or Endnote) or a tool with which you are familiar.

[Comments \(0\)](#)

Step #2: Before You Search

Before You Search

Fill in all of the fields below BEFORE doing your search

*** Required**

Identify Yourself*

Enter the last 4 digits of your Eagle ID

List several keywords (and synonyms) you will use when you search *

[Comments \(0\)](#)

Ask a Librarian!



Ruth Baker

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 Room 22100
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[Send Email](#)

Links:

[Website / Blog](#)
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Subjects:

[Learning Commons Librarian & Asst. Dept. Head, Information Services Dept.](#)

[Anthropology, Sociology, Engineering](#)

Business Specialist



Results

Students responded that they:

- preferred the tutorial guide
- had a more positive learning experience
- were able to complete the assignment more quickly
- achieved better results -AND-
- they asked for even more guidance and examples

[for more details, see: Baker and Fernekes, 2013 virtual poster at: <http://goo.gl/6YKKe>

Next Steps

Here is another example of an assignment guide developed for a current FYE 1220: Horror Cinema course at Georgia Southern:


ZACH S. HENDERSON LIBRARY

[Zach S. Henderson Library](#) » [LibGuides Home](#) » [FYE 1220: Horror Cinema-Library Research Session #2](#) [Admin Sign In](#)

FYE 1220: Horror Cinema-Library Research Session #2

Last Updated: Apr 21, 2014 | URL: <http://georgiasouthern.libguides.com/fyehorror> | [Print Guide](#)

1-Evaluating Periodicals
2-Comparison Chart
3-Examples
4-Worksheet
Feedback

1-Evaluating Periodicals
[Comments\(0\)](#)
[Print Page](#)

Search:
[This Guide](#)

Introduction

In our 2nd Library Research session, we will take the next step in building your skills to successfully complete your class project. You may recall from our first session that we looked at finding information available on the public web.

Now we want to move on to the types of publications you will find in college and university libraries, first in print and later online.

First, we'll review the criteria you covered in the "Evaluating Information" module in Folio. Specifically we will look at **scholarly journals, trade journals and popular magazines--and how they differ.**

Here's what you need to do BEFORE CLASS:

- [Review the materials in this guide:](#)
 - [watch the slide show](#)
 - [view the comparison chart](#)
- [complete the worksheet and BRING IT TO CLASS](#)

Mainly, we want you to think about what makes a source **appropriate** for a college paper or presentation.

[Comments \(0\)](#)

Scholarly, Trade and Popular Periodicals

What's the Difference? There are 3 main types of periodicals you will find in college libraries--still not sure what "periodical" means? (see the slide show below):

- Scholarly Journals (e.g., International Journal of Middle East Studies)
- Trade Journals (e.g., Advertising Age)
- Popular periodicals (e.g., Time, Discover)

Take a look at the "Comparison Chart" (click on the tab at the top of the screen)--you may notice that it bears a striking resemblance to the CRAAP Test...

[also take a look at the Ithaca College Library's web page on "Scholarly, Trade and Popular Journals," <http://www.ithacalibrary.com/sp/subjects/jnltypes> --the comparison chart comes from there]

[Comments \(0\)](#)

Slide Show: Scholarly vs. Popular

 Scholarly vs. Popular Slide Show

 Scholarly vs. Popular slide show [PDF version]

[Comments \(0\)](#)

Conclusions

Assignment guides, designed as stand-alone online tutorials, overcome the inherent weaknesses in one-shot instruction sessions by:

- focusing on a specific assignment with measurable outcomes
- addressing key learning theories
- helping students become more engaged and aware of their own learning
- helping students to build research and critical thinking skills at their point of need
- providing measurable outcomes for the assessment of teaching and learning, mapped to course goals and objectives
- promoting collaboration between library and discipline faculty

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