4-12-2018

Supporting Student-Led Content Creation in the Distance Learning Environment with LibGuides CMS

Jeffrey M. Mortimore

Georgia Southern University, jmortimore@georgiasouthern.edu

Ruth L. Baker

Georgia Southern University, rbaker@georgiasouthern.edu

Supporting Student-Led Content Creation in the Distance Learning Environment with LibGuides CMS

Jeffrey M. Mortimore & Ruth L. Baker
Distance Library Services Conference, April 11-13, 2018, San Antonio, TX

GEORGIA SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

As noted in the 2017 Horizon Report,[1] significant technology trends in higher education since 2012 include:

- Students as creators,
- Blended (hybrid) and collaborative learning, and
- Improving digital literacy.

Ongoing development of online teaching and learning tools is exemplified by the suite of LibApps products:

- As of 2017, LibGuides and LibGuides CMS have been adopted by more than 5,700 libraries;
- LibGuides CMS brings additional functionality of granular editorial and access controls; and
- Provides an opportunity to explore new teaching and learning applications.

[1] Adams Becker et al., 2017

INTRODUCTION (cont'd)

Blended Learning Experiment at Georgia Southern University:

- Expanding on a previous pilot of LibGuides as an instructional platform,[2] librarians at Georgia Southern opened up LibGuides CMS to students and faculty from two blended (hybrid) undergraduate courses.

- The platform hosted collaboratively developed course content and student-created work as a supplement to the Course Management System (Desire2Learn).

- Librarians provided instruction and technical support.

- Activities were grounded in metaliteracy concepts in the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education.*

[2]Baker, 2014

GEORGIA SOUTHERN & HENDERSON LIBRARY

Georgia Southern University:

- Founded in 1906
- Comprehensive Doctoral and Research University with 119 degree programs
- 25,000+ students (after recent consolidation with Armstrong State University)

Henderson Library:

- 50+ full time and part time faculty & staff
- 10 of 19 faculty serve as reference and instruction librarians
- Instruction, consultations, and LibGuides supporting subjects, courses and programs
- 665,000 print volumes, 775,000 government documents, 85,000 journals and 195 subscription databases
- Member of GALILEO consortium, an initiative of the USG Board of Regents

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Steady Stream - LibGuides as a tool for locating and accessing resources
  (e.g., Bielat, Befus & Arnold, 2013; Dalton & Pan, 2014; Dobbs et al., 2013; Emanuel, 2012; McMullin & Hutton, 2010; Morris & Del Bosque, 2010; Reeb & Gibbons, 2004; Roberts & Hunter, 2011; Robinson & Kim, 2010; Staley, 2007; Strutin, 2008).

- Increasing Discussion - LibGuides as an instructional platform
  (e.g., Farkas, 2017; German, 2017; Giullian and Zitser, 2015; Jackson & Stacy-Bates, 2016).

- Barely a Trickle - LibGuides as a platform for student-led content creation
  (i.e., Scull, 2014; Adebonojo and Campbell, 2017).

LITERATURE REVIEW

- ## Scull, 2014
  Undergraduates created a LibGuide as part of a literature review assignment.

- ## Adebonojo and Campbell, 2017
  Undergraduates populated a LibGuide with content relevant to a class research topic, then included the LibGuide as part of a QEP-aligned electronic portfolio.

- In both studies, LibGuides serve as containers for bibliographic content.
- Neither study addresses application of LibGuides in communities of learning or in the distance learning environment.

ENGAGING THE FRAMEWORK: TWO CASE STUDIES

Spring 2017: Collaboration with Faculty in two blended (hybrid) undergraduate courses:

- First-Year Writing: 'Mystory' (ENGL 1102)
- Introduction to Digital Humanities (HUMN 3431)

Active Learning and Metaliteracy experiences:

- Students invited to create group and individual assignments using LibGuides CMS
- Grounded in the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (2015), especially:
  - Authority is Constructed and Contextual
  - Information Creation is a Process

Librarians served as 'guides on the side' by providing ongoing instruction and technical support.

CASE STUDY 1: MYSTORY

What is Mystory? An alternative to standard research paper or essay writing assignments. Students created a series of reflexive, visual essays focused on four areas of their lives:

- Community
- Family
- Career (or Major)
- Entertainment

Students engaged in the practice of 'Electracy' in their essays—the type of writing that emerges with technology, relying primarily on images. According to Ulmer (2003) **electracy** "is to digital media what literacy is to print." [3]

Text from student research and reflections supplemented images in the visual essays. Thus, the Mystory experience constituted transformational learning through changes in the students' understanding of 'self' (Holton, 1978; Hooper & Scharf, 2016; Mezirow, 2000; Seeber, 2015; Tynes, 2017)

Lesson plans and activities were grounded in the Threshold Concepts, Knowledge Practices, and Dispositions in the *Framework* to scaffold activities throughout the semester *(*per Silva, 2016).

_____
[3]Ulmer, G. L. (2003). *Internet Invention: From Literacy to Electracy*. New York: Longman.

CASE STUDY 1: MYSTORY

Blended (hybrid) learning environment

23 students created individual, visual essays as prescribed in the guide.

F2F meetings in the library:

- One LibGuides orientation
- Two Research-related sessions

Essays were completed online in course LibGuides pages.

CASE STUDY 1: MYSTORY

Library Orientation to LibGuides CMS

Overview of LibGuides and Quick Start Guide

Hands-on practice for inserting & editing :

- text
- images

Supplemented by brief tutorials (screenshots) in the course guide.

(Note: student names redacted to address privacy concerns)

CASE STUDY 1: MYSTORY

This screenshot shows more detail on photo editing and layout options.

In subsequent sessions, students were provided with a F2F tutorial on using PowerPoint to create more complex image/text layouts.

This tutorial was added to the guide in the Spring 2018 iteration of the course.
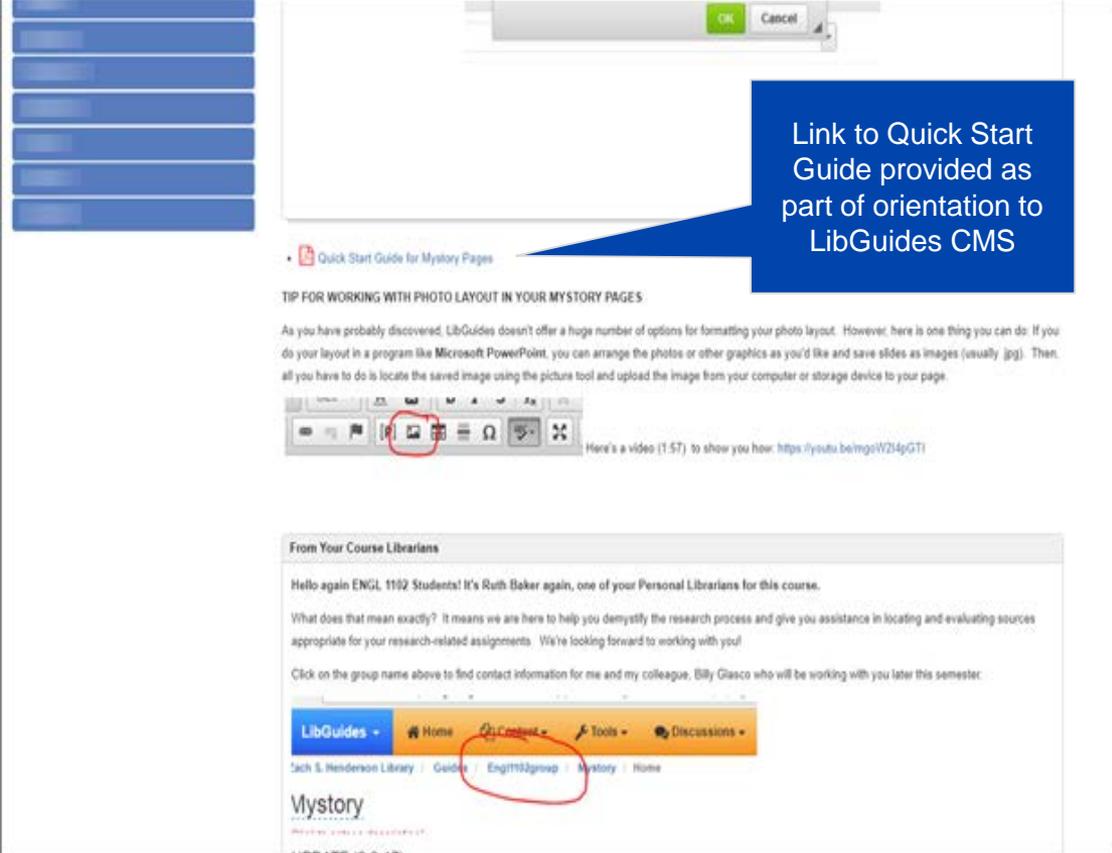
Link to Quick Start Guide provided as part of orientation to LibGuides CMS

CASE STUDY 1: MYSTORY

Example of a completed visual essay

By using LibGuides CMS students were able to:

- Take the lead as content creators;

- Actively engage with course material from the beginning of the course; and

- Gain experience manipulating text and images with a shorter learning curve than other platforms.

12 RB

CASE STUDY 2: DIGITAL HUMANITIES

- Newly-established undergraduate interdisciplinary minor in the Department of History.

- Students develop public-facing online portfolio to display skills to potential employers.

- Portfolios may include audio and video projects, website development, digital mapping, data visualization, 3D design and printing, virtual reality, and video games.

- HUMN 3431 — First course in the 15-hour minor; in addition to introducing disciplinary principles and theories, allows students to learn techniques, conduct projects, and start building their portfolios.

- During Spring 2017 semester, HUMN 3431 included regular F2F meetings, including one session with a librarian addressing online content development.

CASE STUDY 2: DIGITAL HUMANITIES

Why LibGuides? The program needed:

- A cost-effective, scalable online content management system on which students with a wide range of technical skills could develop varied projects and portfolios, and make them publicly accessible following graduation.

- A platform that would support faculty-led projects, as well as host the program's instructional toolkit.

- A platform that would support long-term preservation of portfolio content in the University's institutional repository.

- A platform that could be adapted to online-only instruction if such offerings are developed in the future.

CASE STUDY 2: DIGITAL HUMANITIES

- Librarians created a Spring 2017 cohort group in LibGuides, which included group guides and individual portfolio guides for each of 10 enrolled students .

- Students developed group and individual projects on their guides, including exploratory and self-reflective blog posts, and text analytic, mapping, data visualization, gaming, 3D modelling, and digital storytelling projects.

- As they developed their portfolios, students gained experience with HTML and CSS coding, and with embedding widgets and external content into the platform.

- Further, they were encouraged to explore the platform's appearance and layout customizations.

CASE STUDY 2: DIGITAL HUMANITIES

- Similar to ENGL 1102, librarians served as 'guides on the side,' providing one short instruction session, then ongoing support as students worked on their portfolios.

- During this session, librarians introduced students to their guides, basic content creation techniques, and tools for customizing guide appearance and layout.

- This approach allowed students to take the lead as content creators, inviting them to develop and strengthen metacognitive and metaliteracy skills necessary for effective self-representation and representation of digital content.

CASE STUDY 2: DIGITAL HUMANITIES

- Similar to ENGL 1102, students engaged in the practice of 'Electracy' as related to Digital Humanities content, theory, and practice.

- Furthermore, students actively engaged in Knowledge Practices relevant to each of the Framework's six Frames, especially:

    - Authority is Constructed and Contextual
    - Information Creation as a Process
    - Information Has Value

- By hosting the program's instructional toolkit on LibGuides CMS,transitioning instruction to the distance learning environment should be relatively straightforward.

DISCUSSION

- LibGuides CMS proved effective for engaging students in online communities of learning and student-led content creation (Kirsh, 2005; Oakleaf, 2014; Savery & Duffy, 2001; Zhou & Brown, 2015).

- The platform required minimal training, resulting in reduced cognitive load and stress on working memory. Scaffolding assignments further supported skills development. (Head, 2013; Head & Eisenberg, 2009; Silva, 2016)

- In both cases, the librarians and faculty collaborated to provide active learning experiences that incorporated Threshold Concepts, Knowledge Practices, and Dispositions that comprise the Framework:
    - Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
    - Information Creation as a Process
    - Searching as Strategic Exploration
    - Information Has Value

- The platform also addressed technical requirements related to access and privacy, and faculty supervision of student-created content.

DISCUSSION

ENGL 1102 — In constructing their essays, students engaged with the Frames by:

- Acknowledging that they are developing their own authoritative voice in an area, seeking credible and reliable information, and constructing a body of knowledge (including self-knowledge) and expertise through their visual, reflexive essays (Frame: 'Authority Is Constructed and Contextual');

- Recognizing that information creation is time consuming and iterative. Scaffolding essays throughout the course allowed students to build on and transfer their previous experiences to new information sources and improve their research and analytical skills with each iteration (Frame: 'Information Creation as a Process'); and

- Incorporating both reflexive and analytical writing based on original research supported by library instruction (Frame: 'Searching as Strategic Exploration').

DISCUSSION

HUMN 3431 — In constructing their portfolios, students engaged with the Frames by:

- Recognizing that authoritative content may be packaged formally or informally and may include sources of all media types (Frame: 'Authority is Constructed and Contextual');

- Articulating the capabilities and constraints of information developed through various creation processes (Frame: 'Information Creation as a Process'); and

- Making informed choices regarding their online actions in full awareness of issues related to privacy and the commodification of personal information (Frame: 'Information Has Value').

CONCLUSIONS & 2018 UPDATE

The two cases presented here constitute a pilot study of LibGuides CMS as an instructional platform:

- There is only anecdotal evidence of the effectiveness of LibGuides CMS as a teaching tool but we are encouraged by the role of LibGuide CMS in facilitating deeper learning.

- Students were engaged learners and digital content creators in the blended (hybrid) learning environments where they made substantive contributions to their online communities of learning.

- 2018 Update: the inclusion of additional tutorials on photo layout and online database searching makes LibGuides CMS-based course pages well-suited to fully online courses as well as blended (hybrid) learning environments.

NEXT STEPS

- Continue collaborations with discipline faculty;
- Design assessment strategies to evaluate SLOs in the First-Year Writing (FYW) course (per Oakleaf, 2014); and

    - Evaluate student development of Dispositions associated with the Frames, as an outgrowth of engaging target Knowledge Practices.

- Place more emphasis on copyright and citation practice aligned with the Frame: 'Information Has Value' (this has also been added to the Spring 2018 iteration of the 'Mystory' FYW course).

QUESTIONS?

Contact Us:

Jeffrey M. Mortimore, jmortimore@georgiasouthern.edu
Discovery Services Librarian

Ruth L. Baker, rbaker@georgiasouthern.edu
Research Services Librarian