Dispelling the Independent Research Myth with Collaboration That Works: An Embedded Experience

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Introduction

- Does this sound familiar? If students cannot Google it, then no information on that topic exists.

- Several of Limestone College’s English 102 (Argument and Research) professors have been battling this Google myth independently.

- English 102 is our Introduction to Research course taught by both full time and part time English faculty/instructors.
Before Collaboration

- These faculty/instructors in particular (and Limestone faculty in general) teach research skills on their own, independent of librarians.

- They feel confident about using library resources and teaching research practices.

- However, librarians are seeing students from English and other classes that are unfamiliar with research skills such as locating appropriate resources, Boolean searching, using Google as the be all and end all.

- Thus, the problem....
Collaborative Beginnings

- An opportunity arose to resolve this problem...

- Limestone College earned a grant from CIC to establish a program for Information Fluency in the curriculum.

- As a result, the Embedded Librarian service was established for participating EN 102 faculty in the Day and Online programs.
One such collaborative effort for EN 102 took place in the Spring of 2012 in the form of the Librarian being embedded in four sections of the course.

The aim was not only to have students search beyond Google, but also to provide students early in their college experience good research skills and the opportunity to develop a relationship with the librarian.
The Embedded Librarian service involved having the Outreach/Instruction librarian access to students in the four* sections of EN 102 by:

- having her in class with them for two separate library instruction sessions
- allowing the librarian to create assignment specific LibGuides for the students

* Two of the classes consisted of dual enrolled High School students.
The Embedded Experience

Goals:

- Allow the students to get to know “their personal librarian” by having her in class with them for two separate library instruction sessions

- Create an opportunity in EN 102 classes to address the recurring problems face when doing research (as in the Google myth)

- Assess the effectiveness of the embedded service by having students complete a pre-post test of expected Learning Outcomes

- Allow the Outreach/Instruction Librarian and the English Course Instructor to use data collected in efforts to promote such an embedded experience for all students.
Learning Outcomes of Embedded Experience

- Students will be able to develop effective search strategies when beginning their research (example: identify keywords and alternate words of a given topic).

- Students will be able to recognize the Boolean concept of “And” and “Or” searching.

- Students will be able to identify and utilize appropriate library resources and services for their research needs.

- Students will be able to cite sources correctly and know why they need to.
Pre-Post Test

- Students are given the Pre-Test on library research skills prior to Librarian’s visit.

- This test consists of 10 multiple choice questions and one identification question.

- The students are asked to take a Post-Test near the end of the semester after the Librarian’s second visit.
Results of Pre-Post Test

- All but two of the questions showed improvement from the Pre-Test.

- Four questions showed marked improvement. These questions were about:
  - Peer-reviewed articles
    - Pre % 67.3
    - Post % 86.1
  - Boolean searching
    - Pre % 47.2
    - Post % 62.9
  - Search strategy
    - Pre % 37.3
    - Post % 68.8
  - Plagiarism
    - Pre % 77.4
    - Post % 100
  - Credible websites
    - Pre % 69.2
    - Post % 85.7
Conclusions and Further Directions

- We are greatly encouraged by students’ improvement.

- We would also like students to complete a Self-Assessment together with the Post-Test in the future.

- We hope to share our results with other English 102 faculty.
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