iPods, Inquiry and Information Literacy Handouts

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iPods®, Inquiry and Information Literacy: Developing a Program for USC Upstate’s First-Year Students

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Who We Are

• University of South Carolina Upstate
• Location: Spartanburg, SC (along the I-85 corridor between Charlotte and Atlanta)
• Enrollment: 4,500 – 5,000
• College of Arts and Sciences, Professional Schools in Nursing, Business, and Education (Masters only in Education)
Who We Are

• Average freshman: 3.5 GPA, 1000 SAT
• Approx. 40% first generation
• Freshman class rapidly growing – approx. 850 in Fall 2008 (+50 students per year)
• Former commuter campus transforming into residential campus – space for less than 50% of freshmen to live on campus (new residence hall construction planned for fall 2009)
Prologue:
The Way We Were
The Way We Were

• English 101
  – Fall semester
  – 90-95% of all freshmen (unless AP credit or dual enrollment in high school)
  – “Learning how to write” course
  – Common reading and writing program (*Preface*)
  – Learning research skills, how to use the library, library orientation sessions, etc.
The Way We Were

• University 101
  – Fall semester college success course
  – 3 credit hour elective
  – Required research paper (generally focused on potential career of choice)

• English 102
  – Spring semester
  – “Writing about literature” course
  – More library information sessions and research skills
Concerned about the quality of student research paper.

Questioned appropriateness for a research paper without any focus on students’ research preparedness.

Felt that students needed a foundation in research through learning information literacy skills.

Provide students with tools to complete class assignments and support work in other courses.
Brenda Davenport,  
Director of First Year Composition

- Working with English Faculty to revise first-year courses to become authentic writing courses.
- English faculty identified research process as critical focus of their redesign of the program.
- Interested in a more systematic way to teach the research process and to make that process visible to students.
Andrew Kearns, Coordinator of Library Instruction

Librarians expressed concerns about

• Student perception that there was too much repetition in library instruction.
• What should be covered in University 101 and English 101 sections when many students were enrolled in both courses. Could they be more distinct?
• Amount of material to cover in 50 or 75 minute period, especially with a philosophy of using active learning activities.
The “A-Ha Moment”
Act 1

Year 1: The New Model
New Model for Fall 2007

• ACRL Standards are basis for instruction. Versions adapted for faculty and students.
• Sequenced library instruction: University 101 scheduled in September, English 101 follows
• Distinct “flavor” for each session:
  University 101 = “Library 101”
  English 101 = “Research 101”
  English 102 = “Research 102”
• iPod Tour and Assignment replaces physical library tour for University 101
• Emphasis on process rather than discreet skills, collaborative teaching by classroom instructors and librarians.
The iPod® (mp3) Tour

• Goal is to get students familiar with the library’s resources and layout in a hands-on learning environment

• Students load audio file (scripted and read by a student) onto their own mp3 player or can check out a pre-loaded mp3 player at the circulation desk

• Students complete iPod tour assignment for U101 and provide proof to English 101/102 instructors
Other Assignments in U101

• U101 Library Orientation Session
  – After the iPod tour and assignment

• “You Be the Expert”
  – Annotated bibliography about a subject in which the student has an interest

• Career Exploration
  – Research assignment “worksheet” vs. paper
  – Focus on information gathering rather than paper organization and citations
English 101/102

• 100% of English 101 sections, and all but one English 102 sections attended library sessions.

• Sessions were scheduled in October and November.

• Most were connected in some way with the common final assignment or another research-intensive assignment.
Intermission:

Planning for Year 2
Feedback from Students

• A survey about the iPod Tour was administered to students toward the end of the Fall 2007 semester.
Student Survey Results

The iPod (mp3) Tour and Library Assignment worked together with my University 101 library orientation session to give me a good introduction to the library.
Student Survey Results

- I thought the iPod tour was valuable in knowing where resources are in the library, but it was way too long. By the time I finished I had lost all interest in learning about the library.

- The most valuable thing I learned from the iPod tour and library assignment is information about the reference desk and obtaining help and also pulling up journals and database resources.

- Make the tour more interesting by making the recording more real and interactive, not boring and script like.

- I learned my way around the library and how I can use each resource.
Student Survey Results

• Making copies was a waste of our money.
• Thank you for taking your time to give the tour. Your resources at the library have been very valuable to me during my first semester!
• Try not to make it so long and time consuming.
• The tour was a good opening tool for the library, but I believe it should be done at an early date.
• I think this assignment should be continued, especially for freshmen, so they can learn the resources they need now and in the future.
Lessons Learned

• Sequenced library sessions was an effective way to give each session a distinct focus
  – Need to refine content, especially for English 102
• iPod tour
  – Effective in giving experience of physical library
  – Shorten, leave out less important parts
  – Better earlier in semester?
  – Rethink format (signs, fewer photocopies?)
• Better coordination among three courses
• Encourage librarians to use more engaging formats of library instruction
Act II:

Deepening Commitments and Sustaining the Program
Revisions for Fall 2008

• iPod Tour revised to be shorter, with “fluff” removed. Signage in library and reduction to seven stops.
• iPod Tour Assignment also shortened with less copying.
• iPod Tour now comes BEFORE University 101 library orientation session.
• Improved coordination with English 101 professors using iPod Tour.
Revisions for Fall 2008

• University 101 Information Literacy Assignments
  – iPod tour
  – Library Orientation Session
  – Annotated Bibliography follows library session
  – Career Project later in semester
Learning Outcomes for University 101 Library Session

• Investigate a daily-life question in order to apply the concept of information literacy and the research process.

• Introduce the library catalog and Academic Search Premier database in order to find books and articles.

• One or two hands-on activities used to teach learning outcomes.
Context of University 101 Library Session—Fall 2008

- iPod Tour and Assignment taken before session.
- **Session: Two Outcomes / Activities**
  - **Great Cell Phone Search** – Introduces information literacy / research process
  - **Catalog / Database Search** – Begins work on annotated bibliography
- **Annotated Bibliography Assignment**
English 101/102

• Session has a focus on online searching, with an emphasis on finding articles.

• Still assignment-based.

• Optional Pathfinder assignment in development.
  – Students would do this on their own before the library session.
  – Helps fill gap between University 101 and English 101 sessions.
Challenges

• Continued evolution of English sessions, particularly English 102.
• Full participation of classroom faculty in teaching information literacy skills and understanding the comprehensive approach.
• Sustainability of program over the long run.
• Student buy-in for the necessity of information literacy instruction.
Act III?

- Establish larger committee to oversee program.
- Rewrite *Learning Outcomes* to reflect what is actually being taught.
- Refine librarian/classroom faculty collaboration in teaching particular information literacy skills.
- Process parallels a reexamination of library instruction program and continued evolution of English composition sequence and University 101 course.
- Improved assessment of the program and its impact on student learning