5-1-2008

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Perseverance and Play: Making a Movie for the YouTube Generation

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Abstract

In place of a traditional library orientation lecture at Fairfield University, librarians created a choose-your-own-adventure movie for use in the classroom with an audience response system (ARS), allowing students to vote using clickers. The library administration took a risk by sponsoring the project, but the library director believed in her staff and let us run with our ideas. When we proposed the movie, we did not have an idea for the script; we simply knew we wanted to make a movie and show it in class. Why did we decide to do this when the status quo wasn't disastrous? Like people in any industry, we were pushing ourselves to change with the times, to make our information delivery more engaging—entertaining even. Working under the charge to constantly evaluate and assess our instruction program, we questioned whether it mattered if librarians or professors liked the lecture. Who was the audience after all? If we were going to be successful, we had to captivate our students, the "Millennials," by showcasing the library, its spaces and its services, as the answer to many of their varied needs: social, educational, and recreational. In pursuit of this end, we worked with the Media Center, recruited student filmmakers, employed plenty of brainstorming, wrote a successful script, and produced *Fairfield Beach: the Library*. The ingredients were simple: perseverance and play. What follows is how we put them together.

Keywords: interactive movie, student engagement, library instruction, creativity, audience response devices (clickers), choose-your-own-adventure

Introduction

Imagine you are a first-year student at a private university, and, as part of your required English course, your class visits the library. After the librarian greets everyone, you are handed a device that looks like a mutant calculator or cell phone, and the lights go down. Despite the darkness, you are suddenly alert. Maybe a library movie is a lame idea, but at least you will get to vote on what happens with this "clicker" thing. The movie starts. The opening looks surprisingly professional, like *Laguna Beach,* with young characters who are students, like you. "Cool," you think, "Seems like this movie might actually be somewhat entertaining." The first scene is set in a dormitory, and you can relate. The characters are contemplating whether or not they should go to the library to meet a friend and study. At the end of that scene, you anonymously press the button on your clicker to help them decide. The librarian immediately displays everyone's votes using a bar graph and advances the movie in accordance with the most popular choice. More characters are introduced and romantic intrigues develop. By the end of the movie, you have had a laugh, you have voted six times, and you have been introduced to a number of library services and facilities, including the laptop loaner program, the library café, IM and in-person reference assistance, research databases, the multimedia auditorium, seating accommodations, and interlibrary loan. You have also heard a bit about books, articles, DVDs, and microfilm. The lights come back up, and after the librarian segues to an introduction of the library catalog, you approach the ensuing hands-on activity with a little more enthusiasm.

At Fairfield University's DiMenna-Nyselius Library, this was the scenario that we brought to life when we decided to make *Fairfield Beach: the Library*, a choose-your-own-adventure movie inspired by reality TV, introducing first-year students to library resources, services, and facilities. According to a rigorous search of the literature, librarians had not yet employed the choose-your-own-adventure technique in educational videos prior to the making of *Fairfield Beach: the Library*.

Literature Review: Library Instruction and Orientation Movies in Academic Libraries

The use of movies in academic libraries to teach research skills and orient students to the library emerged in the early 1980s, when John Lolley of Central State University in Oklahoma promoted video for its ability to address the affective dimensions of learning, such as its effect on student attitudes toward libraries and research (Mizrachi & Bedoya, 2007). An article from that era, by Jacobson and Albright (1983), is strikingly astute in its assertions about the use of video in the classroom. A team at Iowa State University library taped a set of four dramatic "play within a play" videotapes to function as the core of a credit-bearing bibliographic instruction course required for all undergraduates. The videos, shown

14

during a formal library instruction session, were designed to teach cognitive skills and promote positive attitudes toward the library among students. The authors cited research demonstrating the efficacy of video for influencing viewer attitudes, and reported that their own experiment with the medium created a more relaxing environment and increased the energy level in the classroom, a relief for librarians who had grown weary of delivering the same lecture repeatedly. After some preliminary testing using the videos without any supplemental materials, librarians discovered that their affective goals were being achieved, but they fell short of reaching their cognitive goals. To ensure that students would learn specific research skills, they included a manual with the tapes for the final assignment. Feedback revealed the videos had made a remarkable impact on students' attitudes and test scores.

More examples of movie making in academic libraries appeared in the literature at the end of that decade. In 1988, Jean Smith described videos created at Arizona State University, Iowa Sate University, The University of California, Irvine and Ohio State University in which detectives, sports announcers or all-knowing computer terminals escorted viewers through the research process. At the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) Undergraduate Library, where Smith was the instruction coordinator, librarians began making movies for use in the classroom. Their video program, *Searchin' Safari*, explained library research with a healthy dose of humor and attractive scenes depicting the city's beaches, sunshine, and surfboards. While UCSD librarians used video to replace lectures, librarians at Brigham Young University's Harold B. Lee library used it to replace disruptive building tours previously given to over 5,000 first year students each year. After paying an outside scriptwriter, recruiting actors among drama students and community members, and outsourcing filming and editing to a local company, they had a ten-minute orientation video with a humorous storyline. The movie, *Library Research: Where Do I Start?*, shown in conjunction with a lecture and a supplemental handbook, hit the mark with students (French & Butler, 1988). Another library that introduced video to replace a tour was the Medical Library at Northwestern University. Their movie oriented medical center staff, new professors and incoming students to library resources and services, while demonstrating the use of catalogs and indexes (Shedlock & Tawyea, 1989). In contrast to these examples, Librarians at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul developed what would be referred to today as a tutorial, using eight video lessons that featured scenes of students interacting with librarians at specific service points to illustrate how different services and materials could be used. The "interactive videos" included quizzes that provided instant feedback to users and served as a self-guided alternative to a boring and unsuccessful ten-week for-credit research skills course that had been held in the library classroom. Students' reactions to the interactive videos were positive, and they cited being able to work at their own pace as an advantage of the new approach (Kautz, Rodkewich & Philipson, 1988).

In the nineties, more articles surfaced featuring instructional video in academic libraries. Tidwell (1994) reported the use of a dramatic movie called

Research Strategy: Overcoming Library Phobias to teach efficient and effective information-seeking strategies to students at Brigham Young University. The narrative follows two characters, one insouciant and the other riddled with anxiety, as they roam the library on a mission to complete a research assignment. As the plot unfolds, the anxious student finds relief due to his diligence in seeking help from librarians while the nonchalant student realizes she should approach research more systematically. Librarians played the video for beginning English composition classes that visited the library for bibliographic instruction. In addition to entertaining and motivating Brigham Young students, *Research Strategy: Overcoming Library Phobias* won a Telly Award. In 1993, With the help of a professional scriptwriter, librarians at California State University, Long Beach partnered with the university's media production department to create *Liberspace*, a fast-paced library movie akin to an MTV video or infomercial. Completed in 1994, the movie implemented best practices noted by Lolley: it focused on students, portrayed the library as a comfortable place, depicted characters using library resources and featured rewards for hard work. Interestingly, *Liberspace* was designed to achieve affective goals—"to motivate, stimulate, and empower students, making them aware of the array of available resources"—but research findings did not demonstrate an attitudinal shift among viewers. After watching, confidence levels remained unchanged regardless of the viewer's initial confidence or lack thereof. Rather, results revealed behavioral shifts; viewers reported a stronger inclination to use the library and seek assistance from librarians. Whether labeled as attitudinal or behavioral, these outcomes demonstrated motivation and feelings of empowerment among students who saw *Liberspace* (Wakiji & Thomas, 1997).

At the turn of the century, probably due to the ease and cost savings afforded by digital video technologies, the pace of video production for library instruction increased. Streaming became popular as a means of delivering video over the Internet and screen capture software hailed a proliferation of screenshot videos. As this article is concerned with movies that offer some level of drama or motion, streamed lectures are beyond its scope. Similarly, movies shot from a computer screen rather than from a camera are not relevant to this discussion. Video tours by librarians at the University of Tennessee (UT) are among the examples of camera-shot library instruction movies in the new millennium. At UT, where tours were not typically included in library instruction sessions, students had expressed frustration with locating materials in the library. To remedy this, a video tour was created and streamed so students could access it at their convenience. To accommodate students, the tour was short and broken into segments (Crowther & Wallace, 2001). A second tour example, reported by John Hickok (2002) at California State University, Fullerton, sought to supplement poorly attended in-person library tours and reach students on the web in a more engaging way. To help them determine which aspects of the library to emphasize, librarians conducted a needs analysis survey of their fellow librarians. Video modules hosted by two young adult actors highlighted library services and collections via a full-motion virtual

16

tour. When students played a movie, it would open in a window that offered an option to click on a supplemental script and take an interactive quiz.

Breaking out of the tour mode, librarians at Bowling Green State University developed a set of seven instructional video modules presented as a mock news program—*Dateline BG*—and used it as part of the library instruction program for General Studies Writing, a composition program in which most first year students were enrolled. After doing some preliminary testing of a script with students, it became apparent that humor was an effective way to reach them. In addition, librarians determined that using a professional newscaster as opposed to an actor was an important element of the videos' entertainment and believability. Librarians determined that the movies were a success based on student and faculty feedback as well as anecdotal evidence suggesting that students were able to understand class content better after watching them (Boff & Cardwell, 2003). Another recent innovation in instructional video was demonstrated at the University of California, Los Angeles, where librarians collaborated with the Office of Residential Life to create short video commercials, called *LITE Bites* (*Library Instruction to Everyone—bite sized*), to be shown on the campus cable television station. The idea behind creating the videos was to reach out to students with different learning styles and increase the level of information competence among undergraduates. Each *LITE Bite* focused on a single aspect of research at the library, preventing viewers from becoming overwhelmed. A unique aspect of these videos is that they were created by students at the campus television station using basic outlines provided by librarians. Not only were these movies educational, but they also had the effect of promoting the library (Mizrachi & Bedoya). According to Melinda Kenneway (2007), such videos can be exploited for marketing purposes when posted online to sites such as YouTube. To read about promotional academic library videos, see Sorrough and Olson (2005) and Goebel and Neff (2007).

For a list, with summaries, of recent academic library instruction and orientation movies, see Appendix A.

Teaching the YouTube Generation

The DiMenna-Nyselius Library's Information Literacy Program operates in conjunction with two required first-year English courses, "Composition and Prose Literature" (EN 11), offered in the fall semester, and "Introduction to Literature and Writing the Research Paper" (EN 12), offered in the spring. These classes visit the library once each semester. Additionally, first-year students are assigned library tutorials on avoiding plagiarism and critically evaluating information. In EN 12, librarians exploit the "hook" of an assigned research paper to motivate learning, but in EN 11—a cherished opportunity to introduce students to the library—we risk losing them unless we apply creative means to engage them. This is especially true for members of the "Millennial" or "YouTube" generation, who are noted for divided attention spans, a penchant for gadgets, and a desire to "control what, when, and

17

how they learn" (Carlson, 2005). According to Millennial scholar Richard T. Sweeney, "Millennials need the ability to customize or personalize their library services" (2005).

With these challenges in mind, we developed a fifteen-minute movie shown at the beginning of class that captivates students through storytelling, supplies them with interactive gadgetry, and sets the stage for learning. In the remaining hour of class, students practice using the library catalog and the Academic OneFile database, having already learned that they can ask for help, take out a laptop, and print. We are aware of research reporting an inverse relationship between entertainment value and comprehension (CIBER, 2008), but our objectives in making the movie were largely affective—appealing to students' emotions was our main goal. Ideally, students who see the movie not only learn something about the library and how it relates to their studies, but also come to appreciate how the library relates to their social and recreational lives. According to feedback received from our students, the movie is memorable. We hope it conveys that the library is not scary or intimidating; rather, it's a comfortable place where people are friendly and happy to help.

Despite its fun-loving approach, making the movie was not easy. Along the way there were several "missteps," but, as we later realized, they were not missteps at all, but part of our creative process. Upon reflection, this process proved to be a recipe for fruitful collaboration.

Partnering with the Media Center

The DiMenna-Nyselius Library is part of the Division of Information Services at Fairfield University. Also within this division is a Media Center noted for its media production expertise and its involvement with students enrolled in the University's "New Media, Film, Television and Radio" program. With such an asset on our doorstep, librarians had been tossing around the idea of collaboration for a few years. When ongoing assessments of the library instruction program revealed that students found our introductory spiel somewhat monotonous, we conceived of a use for video: repackage, as a movie, the information previously delivered as a lecture by individual librarians.

An opportunity presented itself when reference librarians introduced a plan to host "Common Book" discussions in the library during the week of Fall Convocation. That week, first-year students would arrive with their orientation groups to talk about the book they all had read over the summer. These discussions would replace the library open house held in previous years, which was discontinued due to a change in the university's academic calendar. Because this decision freed up funds, we suggested redirecting the money to a movie project. This proposal was met with approval from our innovative library director, who not only had faith in us, but committed staff time and resources to our fledgling idea. She took a risk and trusted our creative spirit. Most importantly, she approved the bare

bones concept. There would have been no way that we could have handed her a detailed outline up front. She gave us room to brainstorm and play. Because the project went through countless iterations, several less-than-perfect ideas cropped up along the way. Chances are, if we had presented some of our initial drafts, the project might have been scrapped. Because we were allowed to pursue our vision, we ended up with an award-winning product that students enjoyed.

Recruiting First-Year Student Filmmakers

In January, 2007, we scheduled our first meeting with the Media Center Director. Sitting down together, we explained that we wanted to introduce students to the library in a hip, edgy way that would grab their attention. The concept was nebulous. We said we wanted an action film that was also a comedy that maybe had a touch of romance, and the characters should be appealing to students. We knew the movie should be funny and fast-paced, but we didn't really have any plot ideas. The solution seemed obvious: recruit students to compose a script and guide them along the way. Approximately one month later, two film majors (rising sophomores, no less!) signed onto our project. According to plan, they would each write a "treatment," or synopsis, of their envisioned storyline, and we would have our pick between these. We purposely did not suggest any possible storylines, because we wanted an authentic first-year student point of view. Both treatments arrived a few weeks after an initial meeting wherein we explained our objectives to the students, including a directive to be provocative. We had presented them with a list of all library services, resources, and facilities that were important to feature, along with a brief explanation of each, and then we told them, "Be wacky; be wild; use your imagination!"

One treatment positioned the library at the center of new and mysterious developments in the investigation of JFK's assassination (a concept inspired by a photo, found in the library's archives, of JFK visiting the town of Fairfield), while the other script meandered through a confusing mélange of library activities set in motion by a rivalry between two students and an extra-credit challenge posed by their professor. "Hmmm," we sighed, scratching our heads, "These need some work." That's when we sequestered ourselves in an office and started to brainstorm. Despite the fact that the JFK plot hung together with some measure of cohesion and its competitor did not, we decided to adapt the latter in favor of its more contemporary focus. The plot evolved several times during these meetings, and it grew longer and more complicated as we tried to force it to illustrate various library services. For instance, we had students tripping other students to try to slow each other down on the way to the . . . microfilm? By Friday, we were explaining interlibrary loan using a clichéd plot device—the helpful nerdy kid who conveniently pops up from behind a book shelf. Our results were laughably inauthentic.

19

Over that March weekend, each of us discussed the developing plot with friends, some of whom were not librarians. It was not easy to tell the story, but we did our best. More significantly, it was not easy for our listeners to comprehend it. Our friends agreed that the plot was a bust. On Monday, we compared notes and acknowledged we must return to the drawing board. The students' proposals were not working because it seemed that they wrote plots to please us librarians rather than their classmates, and—more importantly—as rising sophomores lacking a clear understanding of all of the library's services, neither student possessed an appropriate framework from which to build a plot.

A Little Hollywood: Writing Our Own Script

Starting from scratch, without the students, we met frequently, determined to brainstorm some actual lightening bolts. Several ideas washed over us—aliens landing on the library's front lawn, trespassing turkeys (the campus is home to many of these birds), mysterious notes sandwiched between the pages of library books—but not one flash of pure insight hit home. We were, however, struck very funny by every silly notion we imagined. It did not matter that we were laughing until we cried as we blurted out one ridiculous plot twist after another because we still did not have a workable treatment. We wiped the tears off our faces and agreed that the movie needed to be simple and down to earth. We just needed to figure out how it could be done.

Each of us scrawled scenario after lame scenario onto napkins and scrap sheets of paper, hoping that the other had made more progress. It soon became apparent that neither of us had broken through. Almost in despair, we sat down together. Suddenly, it hit us: since the movie would be produced as a DVD, with all of the interactive features digital technology provides, why not employ a choose-your-own-adventure approach? Eureka! We called our colleagues at the Media Center right away to confirm this was feasible. Our hopes were on target. We looked at each other in amazement—getting all of our worst ideas out had paved the way for our best idea.

The Students are the Stars

As spring flowers bloomed, we began the hard work of writing a movie script with new momentum. Despite our choose-your-own-adventure breakthrough, we still needed a plot. While hashing out ideas, a whiteboard came in handy. We drew a flow chart, but it was so confusing even we couldn't follow it. Nevertheless, we kept scribbling, erasing, and rearranging. At first, our plot focused on impending due dates (a.k.a. impending doom)—a late paper, a quiz, a midterm. Librarians were poised to sweep in and save our heroine. Portraying the library as the true hero, we were missing the mark. We needed to be less critical of students'

20

study habits if we wanted to create a student-centered film. We needed to be more playful, but there were important questions to consider: Are we often taking too much of a librarian-centered perspective, even when we think we're being student-centered? Do we ask the students what they want or do we make assumptions? Focusing on students' social lives was the key; we didn't want to portray them as stressed out or cramming for exams, we wanted to show them interacting in a natural way and depict how the library might fit into their lives, almost as a backdrop. That's when we began to draw inspiration from *Laguna Beach,* the quintessential 2007 teen melodrama.

It was time to regroup with our young filmmakers. So as not to let them down, we discussed our rationale for developing the script internally and explained that we valued their cinematic expertise. They reviewed our first draft and recommended reducing the number of characters from eight to four, an important revision that resulted in our final lineup, with Julie as the protagonist, accompanied by Joey, Amanda and Matt. In regard to the actors, we suggested casting with some level of ethnic or racial diversity in mind. Our producer and director, a talented student named Robert (Bob) Cammisa, agreed to look for appropriate actors with the caveat that casting during the summer, when few students are on campus, can be challenging. It turned out that he wasn't able to build a diverse cast, but he was able to recruit among students with experience in theater, including three recent graduates. The opportunity to promote the acting careers of Fairfield University alumni was an unexpected bonus.

Climbing the Decision Tree

It made perfect sense for the opening scene to be set in a dormitory à la reality TV, and we could use decisions as pivots to move Julie, our main character, into the library and through specific services. She would use the library while flirting with two different boys she liked, helping her friends, and completing her assignments. We realized that the key was simplicity—center the plot around Julie, throw in a love triangle—and there you have it. The library, then, is subtly folded into the complexity of our heroine's life without stealing the spotlight. In addition, librarians do not assume the oft-played role of "rescuer extraordinaire" but rather play an extremely peripheral role, which is probably much more authentic for the average college student. To accomplish this, we needed to puzzle out what competing options Julie might have to contemplate. At first, inspired by the concept of gaming, we were tempted to pose choices between things like whether to search the library catalog or Google, but we quickly realized that if students were forced to choose between "right" and "wrong" procedures, we would be testing them without the benefit of a lesson in research skills. Our goal was to attract students to the library, not overwhelm them, and we wanted them to know how many options the library offered. It became clear that offering "soft" choices with no right answers was the best solution. Thus, the movie poses several dilemmas related to library

21

resources, services, and facilities, including, "Ask for reference help or look for books on the shelves," and "Join Matt for coffee or watch a movie with Amanda." With a plot empowered to transform itself in response to viewers' preferences, a multitude of storylines developed, and we kept track of them using a decision tree (see Appendix B).

Lights, Camera, Action

Before filming could begin, we fine-tuned the script. In the spirit of *Laguna Beach,* we added sassy dialogue and innuendo to make it as funny and sexy as possible. In advance of filming, we learned from Bob that the actors would need to ad lib now and then, to extend the duration of scenes. Apparently, movies need a little time to settle, for viewers to adjust, before significant transitions can play out successfully. Once the script was finished, Bob created story boards and presented them to us. Satisfied with his work, we gathered props for the crew and scheduled filming in the library.

Shooting lasted for two midsummer days. Two members of the library staff, Devin Hagan and Leslie Porter (co-author of this article) had bit roles. As we librarians were not in the director's chair—more on this later—we couldn't influence any of the action, but we peeked in often. It turned out that our oversight was crucial; when the crew couldn't find the "used" sticker prop needed to set the stage for humor in the group study scene, we located it for them in the nick of time. One thing we did not expect was the reaction of our actors and crew. Many of them had never really understood how the library worked. Making the movie was a revelation for them, and they followed up filming with several visits to the reference desk, pursuing their own research.

Screening the Rough Cut

One aspect that presented a challenge during the filming was that the Media Center took creative control after the storyboards were approved. This meant that we did not have input with the casting or during the shooting, which is why we were not in the director's chair, as mentioned earlier. We had to trust that our script provided enough direction to elicit the final product we desired.

After Bob had most of the editing done, we watched the rough cut and observed something unexpected—the actor playing Matt was hamming it up heavily. His gestures were over the top! We found ourselves torn between laughter and indignation. This was not the Matt we had envisioned. As we walked back to the library after the screening, Matt was on our minds. Was he too rude? Was he actually funny? We were concerned. But, as we soon discovered after watching the movie with others, Matt had a purpose; he was there for the guys! His antics added a masculine twist to an essentially feminine narrative, wherein viewers implicitly

22

assume the persona of a female protagonist as they proceed through the film. Matt's comical behavior also served to smooth some of the sexual tension between characters, possibly prudent in hindsight.

When audiences consistently laughed during Matt's scenes, we were surprised and relieved. We were lucky this time. Reflecting on this experience, if we did the project over again, we would strive to have better communication from the outset. Since it was our first movie project, we were not sure how the process worked and we fully expected to be involved in the filming, seemingly the most important juncture.

Clickers for the Classroom

As the fall semester approached, we began adjusting our EN 11 lesson plan to accommodate the movie. Contemplating the film's interactivity, we wanted some way to tally a majority response while maintaining individuals' anonymity. Clickers, voting devices for an audience response system (ARS), were the obvious solution. The Vice President for Information Services, who is also the University Librarian, decided to purchase a set for the library, allowing us to serve as a campus test bed. We selected a simple model, the "Cricket," from Interwrite Learning (now eInstruction). The kit included forty clickers, a USB RF device, and simple software. Setting it up and training fellow librarians took several hours, but was not difficult. Other uses of clickers for library instruction have been reported by Hoffman and Goodwin (2006), Collins (2007) and Kerns (2007), but none of them mentioned use of an ARS in conjunction with a movie.

The Moment of Truth: Showing the Movie in Class

The movie was ready to go in time for EN 11 season, and librarians involved in teaching had a great time playing it for their classes. Students enjoyed it too, as evidenced by their giggles and expressions of astonishment. At the end of each session, we solicited feedback via an online form (see Appendix C) and received more commentary than we ever had received before. When asked what surprised them the most about the class, one student remarked, "The Movie. I thought it was going to be stupid, but it was actually funny and pretty informative." Another said, "The Movie! It was very unexpected but we all loved it! That was the best part of class. It was funny, but in a very informative way." Roughly forty students expressed surprise at the movie; as one of them put it, "I didn't see that one coming." Another said, "I was surprised that we had clickers to vote with." Many comments discussed the movie's entertainment value, including these: "I enjoyed the movie and liked how it was interactive and kept you focused;" "GOOD MOVIE;" "It was very good; I would like to see the segments that the class did not view;" and "THE FAIRFIELD BEACH MOVIE WAS AMAZING." Just as importantly, they

23

learned about the library. Of the 830 students who attended the library instruction sessions, 492 were surveyed. Of those sampled, 93 percent indicated that the movie contributed either somewhat (47%) or substantially (46%) to their awareness of library services and resources. One student who found it helpful said the following: "The movie was really good and helped me realize what the library offered." Several students said they hadn't known they could "rent free laptops," and two expressed surprise that librarians might be contacted through instant messaging. The movie improved students' experience of the class as a whole; their commentary bears this out: "[I was surprised to learn] how much easier it is to write a paper using the library;" "[The session was] more enjoyable and interactive than I thought it was going to be;" "[I was surprised by] all of the fantastic things the library really has;" and our favorite, "The Library helps you more than I thought it did."

By contrast, a small number of students (6%) indicated that the movie contributed very little, and only one percent of those responding felt the movie did not contribute at all to their awareness of library services and resources. Of those who indicated that some information received during the session was still unclear to them, we received the following comments related to the movie: "[I'm not sure] how to use microfilm;" "[I'm unclear about] how to order books through other libraries if it isn't available here;" "I don't know where the stuff that they showed in the movie is;" "Somewhat unsure of floor plan;" and "I'm unclear about the features of the library and where they are located." Regarding the remarks about microfilm and interlibrary loan, we were pleased that students left class aware those services existed—awareness, not mastery, being our main objective. As for the complaints of feeling disoriented, we agreed we should strive to illustrate the connection between scenes and actual service points more emphatically during post-movie discussions.

At the end of our project, we had strengthened bridges between the Library and the Media Center, built friendships with some of the cast and crew, and introduced students to the library and all it offers. Shortly thereafter, we received the gratifying news that *Fairfield Beach: the Library* was among the Connecticut Library Association's PR prize recipients of 2008, winning the "Innovation Award." Our perseverance and willingness to play paid off in more ways than one!
Watch Fairfield Beach: the Library, at
http://faculty.fairfield.edu/mediacenter/library/.

It's a Wrap: Reflections

Experience keeps a dear school—one to which the authors contribute the following advice: First of all, persevere! If you have an idea, be brave enough to propose it. If you believe in the idea, exercise your persuasive powers. We cannot stress enough the importance of support from library administration. Without such support, *Fairfield Beach: the Library* would not have made it beyond the "figment of imagination" stage of development. Once support is secured, gaining the trust of

stakeholders is equally necessary. In our case, our library director trusted that our sketchy ideas would eventually bear fruit. She not only trusted us, she was patient.

Once you have buy-in, get to work brainstorming, which can feel like groping around in the dark (and that's okay). The creative process is messy, but ultimately, it is the only way to befriend the muse. As we worked on the script, inspiration sometimes seemed fleeting. It never really abandoned us though, because we recognized the value of play. Frequently amused, we laughed a lot, which lifted our spirits and carried us over the rough parts.

Throughout the process, it is essential not to lose sight of practical matters. The chaos of creativity can fall apart without intermittent reality checks. Keep one vigilant eye open to copyright concerns when selecting music, especially if your movie will be posted on the Web. This is an opportunity to teach and be a copyright leader on your campus. Resist the temptation to make assumptions; question everything. Inquisitiveness facilitates communication, and the more communication you have, especially when embarking on collaborative efforts with other departments or campus entities, the better the collaboration will be. If we had it to do over again, we would have established a clearer understanding of our role in the movie making process from the beginning. Find out if you will have creative control throughout the process. You may not be in the director's chair unless you spell it out. In Hollywood, the screenwriters are probably not on the set very often. Gather information from outside sources as well; research everything.

If you have any doubts, take comfort from Albert Einstein, who said, "Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new." Failure often leads to success. Finally, do not be afraid to play. We had a great time making the movie. It was fun, and it surprised everyone: our Media Center colleagues, the students, other librarians, and maybe even us, too! Sometimes we all need to let loose a little.

Appendices

Appendix A: Other Recent Library Instruction and Orientation Movies

Other recent examples of academic library movies made for instructional purposes tend to fall into two categories: dramatic features and video tours. Dramatic features run the gamut, but share one common thread: they focus on the library itself or librarians and what they do. These videos often involve students who need help and librarians who "save" them. Most library tours tend to show stills or scenes from the library with voice-over narration, but with the growing ease of creating and editing digital video, many libraries now offer video tours and post them on YouTube. The tours generally focus on library collections and services, and sometimes they come in the form of "dramatized video tours" in which there is an associated storyline.

25

Dramatic Features

Valdosta State University has produced some dramatic films, notably *Crime & Punishment*, a short about plagiarism offenders who end up in the county jail and *Murder in the Stacks* about one librarian who kills another librarian. These two rather dark films were produced by the University's Media Center and feature student actors and librarians. *Murder in the Stacks* is centered around librarians, what they do, their strange subculture, and the inexplicable murder of one of their own. View both films at: http://www.valdosta.edu/library/make/media/library_films.shtml.

Williams College librarian Nick Baker created the *L-Team*, a comedic short about librarians that is a take-off on the opening credits of the TV show the *A-Team.* The film portrays librarians as heroes who are ready to save the day. There is no dialog. View the *L-Team* at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YwCUtpbUWgk.

Ithaca College's instructional video, *Booked for the Twenties, or, All You Have to Do is Try*, has the look and feel of a 1920s silent film, but it includes narration. The storyline involves students who are looking for information about the 1920s and who "dash confusedly" around the library seeking it. This film is available on DVD.

The University of Virginia Library's *Libra* video was made by students to be shown during first-year library orientation sessions. The students wrote a storyline centered around one student's crush on a fellow—rather brainy—student. He follows her through the different libraries, and, on the way, learns about many of the different services and conveniences offered by the libraries. View *Libra* at http://www.lib.virginia.edu/student_video/libravideo.html.

The University of California Los Angeles College Library offers *LITE Bites*—short for *Library Instruction To Everyone*—one to two-minute videos originally made to be shown on resTV, the resident hall cable TV station. Each of these videos focuses on one aspect of library research. Now available online as well, the videos were produced by students based on outlines supplied to them by librarians. In one *LITE Bite*, *The Librarian of Oz*, students clothed as characters from the Wizard of Oz "follow the red brick road" to the library where they learn how to use the *Road to Research* tutorial. View *LITE Bites* at http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/college/help/lite/index.html.

Video Tours

The University of San Francisco Gleason Library/Geschke Center video tour provides a historical overview and discussion of collections. View this tour at http://www.usfca.edu/library/movies/tourbbhi.html.

The University Libraries of the University of Tennessee Knoxville offer video tours broken down into short segments, showcasing the library floor-by-floor. View them at http://www.lib.utk.edu/refs/video/visualtours.html.

The University Library at California State Library, Long Beach tour opens with an introduction by the President of the University surrounded by students,

26

lending it a more promotional feel. View it at http://www.csulb.edu/library/video/.

Dramatized Video Tours

Harper College Library created a comedic tour in which a librarian and student get taken around the library on a book truck. The student keeps insisting she already did her research, and the librarian keeps forgetting her name. View this tour at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JHljR4LYmOA.

In the University of Dayton's Roesch Library tour, two students are giving a tour when they are interrupted by a hapless student who never uses the library. Together, they explore the library and learn all of the ways it can help them with their work. View it at http://library.udayton.edu/g/media/library.wmv.

The Williams College Libraries' documentary-style *Library Mystery Tour*, hosted by librarians, is all about what reference librarians do and how they can rescue students with their "super powers." The video is part of an assignment that students must complete on their own using puzzle pieces featured in the video. View the Library Mystery Tour at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i-t0LHnw-fc&feature=related.

Students at the University of Pennsylvania created a music video introducing the Weigle Information Commons in the Van Pelt Dietrich Library Center. With vocals parodying Petula Clark's, "Downtown," three student tour guides sing their way through the facility, showing off its features with great ardor. View the music video at http://wic.library.upenn.edu/about/musicvideo.html.

Appendix B: Decision Tree

Library Movie Decision Tree

27
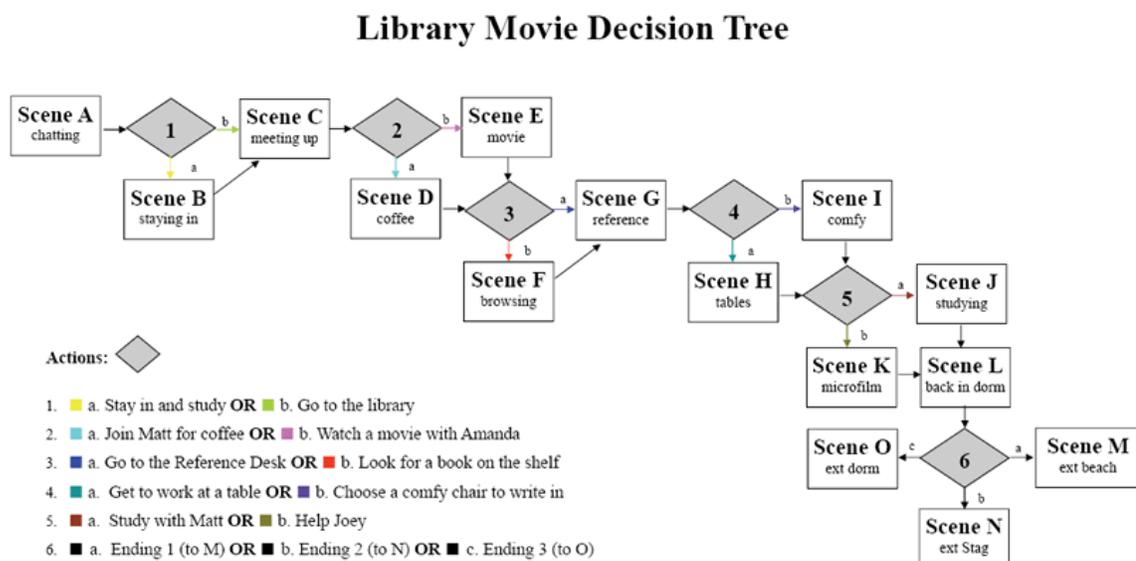
Appendix C: Evaluation Form

1. I now have a good understanding of Library services and resources.

○ Strongly Agree   ○ Agree   ○ Disgree   ○ Strongly Disagree

2. The movie contributed to my awareness of library services and resources.

○ Substantially   ○ Somewhat   ○ Very Little   ○ Not At All

3. I am confident in my ability to use the Library Catalog.

○ Strongly Agree   ○ Agree   ○ Disgree   ○ Strongly Disagree

4. I feel prepared to find articles using the Academic OneFile database.

○ Strongly Agree   ○ Agree   ○ Disgree   ○ Strongly Disagree

5. The Librarian presented the material in a clear and understandable manner.

○ Strongly Agree   ○ Agree   ○ Disgree   ○ Strongly Disagree

6. What information received today is still unclear to you?

7. What about this session surprised you most?

8. Rate the overall value of your Library instruction class session.

○ Excellent   ○ Good   ○ Fair   ○ Poor

28

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29

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