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Next Level Learning: Using Pedagogically-Designed Research Guides in Information Literacy Instruction

Susan Wengler, MBA, MLIS



Purpose

Pilot study to explore impact of pedagogically-designed research guide (PDRG) on information literacy (IL) student learning outcomes.

Background

Queensborough Community College (QCC)

- One of seven community colleges within City University of New York (CUNY) system
- Fall 2016 enrollment – 15,569 students
- Diverse urban campus located in Bayside, Queens, New York
- Students from 129 countries; 35% report speaking language other than English at home
- 79% of all first-time, full-time freshmen receive some form of financial grant aid
- 72% of incoming freshmen require at least one remedial course

QCC General Education Outcome #4 and IL

- QCC's General Education Outcome #4: *Use Information Management and Technology Skills Effectively for Academic Research and Lifelong Learning*. Scoring rubric includes four dimensions pertaining to identification, use, evaluation and citation of information.
- Library faculty contributes to campus-wide IL effort through planning and teaching of assignment-based sessions, which are requested by classroom faculty from all disciplines. Most classroom faculty opt for one IL session due to scheduling priorities and constraints.
- Table 1 maps QCC General Education Outcome #4 dimensions to potential IL session student learning outcomes. Note: Not all outcomes can be addressed in single IL meeting.

Table 1: QCC General Education Outcome #4 - IL Session Map

QCC General Education Outcome #4 Dimensions	IL Session Student Learning Outcomes
Identify the scope of inquiry or investigation needed for the assignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify information needs as related to research assignment• Develop research question as related to research assignment• Create search strategy as related to research assignment
Use evidence and/or sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Locate relevant information sources at QCC's Kurt R. Schmeller Library
Cite as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cite selected information sources in compliance with style dictated by research assignment
Evaluate information and sources critically	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assess information sources based on authority, accuracy, currency, purpose and relevance• Use that critical assessment to inform selection of information sources for research assignment
Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excavate evidence from information source and synthesize into research assignment

Research Guides

- To supplement instructional sessions, QCC library faculty can create custom online research guides using LibGuides, Springshare LLC content platform product licensed by QCC and popular among academic libraries
- QCC library website currently hosts 92 course research guides and 38 subject research guides. Guide design is typically based on a pathfinder or bibliographic model, with emphasis on how to find books, articles and reliable websites.
- To date, no assessment has been completed at QCC to measure impact of research guides and research guide design on IL-related student learning outcomes
- Recent work at Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis indicates that research guides which are pedagogically-designed and emphasize all aspects of research process have a positive impact on pre- and post- IL test scores as well as student artifact rubric scoring (Lowe, Maxson, & Stone, 2017).

Methods

Participants

- Two sections of ENGL101 – *English Composition I*, three-credit course included in first-year writing requirement
- Both sections taught in Spring 2018 semester by Professor John Yi of QCC English Department
- Both sections required to prepare and submit research project
- One section identified as control group, one section identified as experimental group
- IL instruction:
 - Control group: Two IL sessions taught by Principal Investigator (PI)
 - Experimental group: Two IL session taught by PI; required engagement with PDRG over four weeks worth 12% final grade

PDRG

- Infographic on PDRG homepage illustrates six-steps of The Research Process
- Each step corresponds to page within PDRG
- Each PDRG page includes step-specific micro-lecture (Camtasia) and quiz (LibWizard Survey)
- Quizzes require application of The Research Process concepts to ENGL-101 research assignment

Data Collection

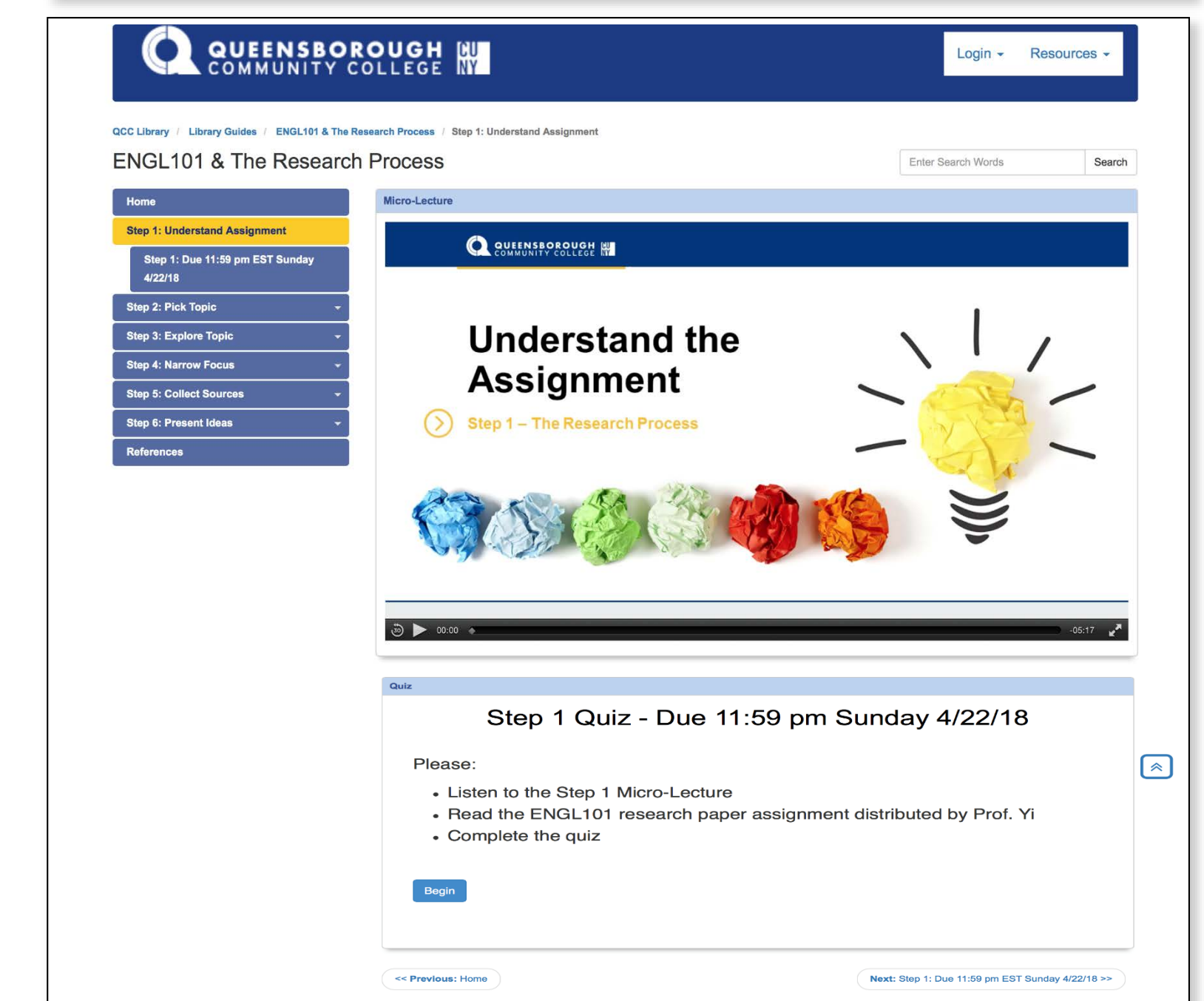
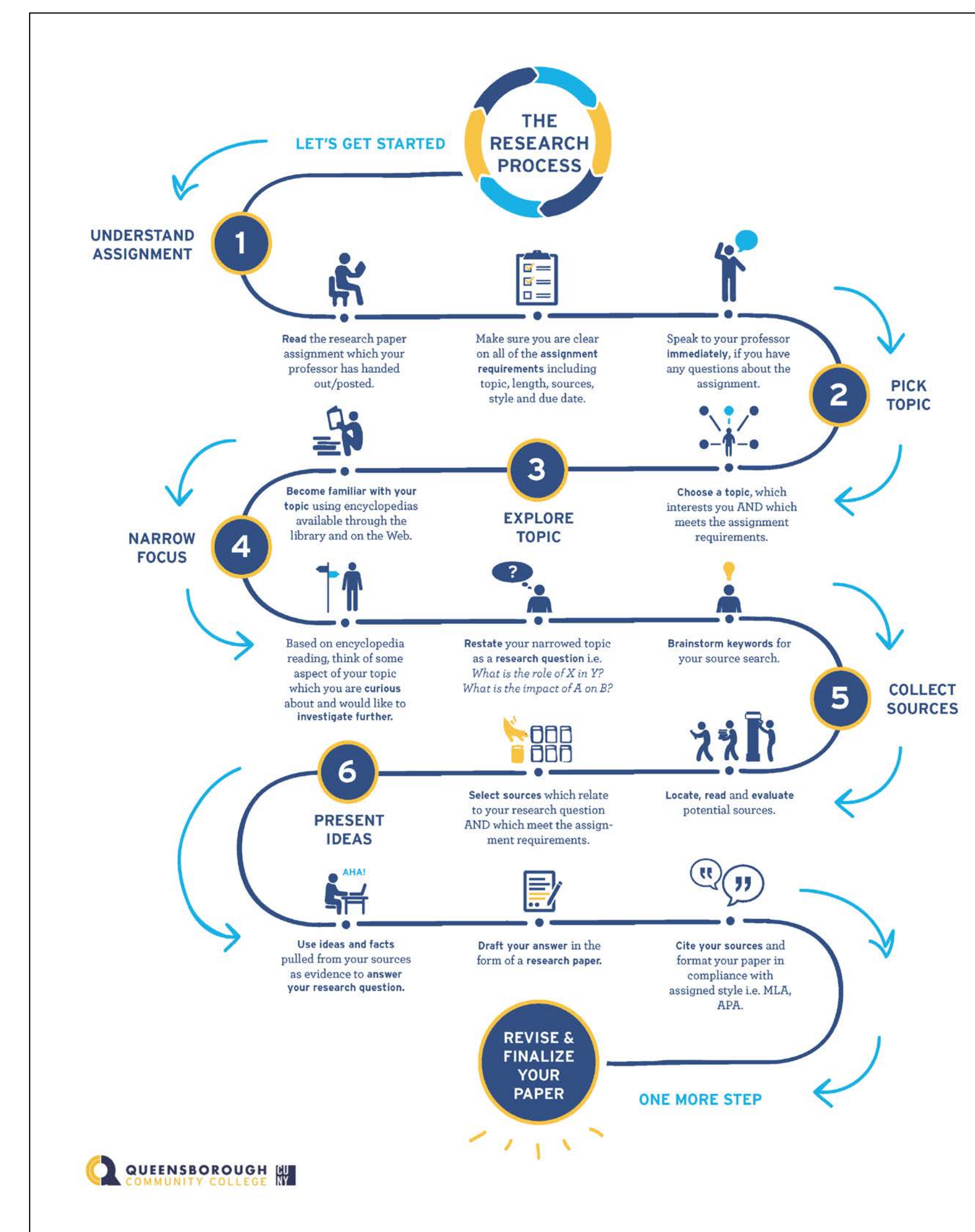
Interviews

- Data will be collected through semi-structured interviews of 5-8 students recruited from control group and 5-8 students recruited from experimental group
- Interview questions will ask subjects to describe their experience in completing research assignment. Experiment group subjects will also be asked to describe their engagement with PDRG.
- Audio-recording of each 60-minute interview will be professionally transcribed. PI will code interview transcripts using grounded theory approach and then systematically analyze results for emergence of themes (Charmaz, 2006).

Artifacts

- Data will also be collected through scoring of student artifacts (i.e. research assignment papers) using QCC *General Education Assessment Task Force's Information Management Rubric*

Pedagogically-Designed Research Guide



Project Status

- Control group IL sessions with PI are scheduled for 2/5/18 and 5/7/18
- Experimental group IL sessions with PI are scheduled for 2/8/18 and 5/3/18
- Experimental group engagement with PDRG commences on 4/17/18 and ends on 5/13/18

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