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

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Next Level Learning: Using Pedagogically-Designed Research Guides in Information Literacy Instruction
Susan Wengler, MBA, MLIS

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 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QCC General Education Outcome #4 Dimensions</th>
<th>IL Session Student Learning Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify the scope of inquiry or investigation needed for the assignment</td>
<td>Identify information needs as related to research assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use evidence and/or sources</td>
<td>Locate relevant information sources at QCC’s Kurt R. Schmeller Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cite as appropriate</td>
<td>Cite selected information sources in compliance with style dictated by research assignment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate information and sources critically</td>
<td>Assess information sources based on authority, accuracy, currency, purpose and relevance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use information effective to accomplish a specific purpose</td>
<td>Extract evidence from information sources and synthesize into research assignment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Research Guides
- To supplement instructional sessions, QCC IL 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, Masson, & Stone, 2017)

Methods
- Two sections of ENGL101 – English Composition I, three-credit course included in first-year writing requirement
- Both sessions taught in Spring 2018 semester by Professor John Yi of QCC English Department
- Both sessions 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 (Carmatza) 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 systemically analyze results for emergence of themes (Charmaz, 2006)

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

References
- Mahaffy, M. (2012). Student use of library research guides following library instruction. Communications in Information Literacy, 6(1), 203-213

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