NFORMATION LTERACY:
Taking the 'I' Out of Instruction

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Introduction

In this paper, five librarians from across the United States, introduced through ACRL Immersion '09, present scenarios on taking the 'I' out of instruction in order to enhance student-centered learning. At Goshen College, library staff welcome first-year students to an event that addresses the purpose and extent of the reference collection, the location of items in the catalog and on the shelf, the layout of the building, and location of service points. Clickers are used at Johnson & Wales University to create a Jeopardy-style game in which teams compete in an engaging exercise. A Hood College classroom is transformed into a courtroom where teams of lawyers argue the sides of a controversial topic. Finally, problem-based learning (PBL) is employed at Utah State University and Neumann University as the starting point for student learning.

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Groovin' at a Library Open House

In the fall of 2009 the Good Library of Goshen College introduced a limerick-led, 70s-clad library open house called the Groove-in. The Groove-in was a significant departure from its earlier orientation, a self-guided walking tour in which students visited library service points and filled out a worksheet the librarians graded for credit. During a brainstorming session on possible library orientation activities, a student library worker remarked, "We need to have more life, action, and energy in the library orientation activity."

One goal of the Groove-in was to make students' first experience with the library fun and memorable, because students who have had a positive introduction to libraries report higher use throughout their tenure (Pierand & Graves, 2002). Other examples in the literature point to the benefits of an engaging library orientation. Brown et al (2004) reports that anxiety is significantly decreased after library orientation sessions, and in a study by Marcus (2003), 70% of students participating in a library adventure said librarians are, "enthusiastic, caring, and very helpful" vs. 50% of the control group students.

Beginning in April with a brainstorming session, librarians evaluated approaches to library orientation. Librarians decided on a 70s-themed event that directed students to stations containing activities that supported learning outcomes based on ACRL Information Literacy (IL) competency standards. See Appendix I for limericks, stations, and standards.

During April and May librarians brainstormed with student library workers and conducted a literature review. Learning objectives and stations that supported learning were created in June and July. Other summer work included collaborating with colloquium faculty, organizing gifts

and prizes, writing limericks, creating workers' schedules, contacting PR, lining up music and costumes, and promoting the event. August brought a dress rehearsal, adjustments to the flow, additions of student workers and photographers, and a final refining of details prior to the Groove-in, held the first week of classes in September.

The assessment of student learning occurred during the open house activity; students' guidebooks were stamped when they successfully completed each learning objective. In addition, 18% of students replied to a survey emailed to all first year students: 14% of comments were negative (*I thought it took way too long; I think it might have been more helpful to just have a guided tour.*) and 86% of comments were positive (*the Groove-in was helpful and fun; I loved the groove-in!!! It was quite an adventure!*)

What will become of future open houses? Librarians will choose a new theme each year, and they have learned to plan for staffing to manage traffic flow and staff fatigue so the day runs smoothly. What rocked about the Groove-in? Students were enthusiastic, and groovin' in the library fostered camaraderie and cooperation among library staff that sustained them all year.

I'll Take Information Literacy for 500

Librarians at Johnson & Wales University's Charlotte campus library support the educational mission of the university by assisting students in acquiring and developing critical IL skills. Key aspects of this goal are the ability to find, evaluate, and use information effectively as defined by the ACRL IL standards.

Librarians use clickers in classes to quiz students about available library resources as an effective application of active learning technology. Librarians teach two classes: Module I, required by all English composition students, and Module II, taught to all science classes. In Module I librarians introduce students to the library catalog, electronic resources, and how to integrate sources and avoid plagiarism. Module II focuses on evaluating resources using the familiar criteria of accuracy, authority, currency, objectivity, and relevance. Previously, in a one-shot Module I session, librarians asked students which database was the best choice for certain information needs. In the redesigned class, students searched for answers in databases just introduced and responded using clicker technology.

Another change occurred in Module II classes. Formerly, students were broken into groups and asked to evaluate information sources. Groups were given three short article excerpts, which they were asked to evaluate from the criteria presented in the lecture. Each element of the information evaluation litmus test was used, and the article was measured from the perspective of strength and weakness per criteria. For example, one article could be strong in accuracy and authority yet weak in currency and relevance. A class discussion followed. This activity fulfilled the active and collaborative learning requirements. However, student participation was low. Librarians attempted to improve participation by using a

team activity with clicker software in the format of a Jeopardy style game show. Using four of the criteria as categories, librarians created a series of challenging questions and formed the students into groups (see Appendix II). Students responded enthusiastically, and the general consensus among staff is that there is more participation in this type of activity.

Analyzing how clickers are used and tying them to activities rather than viewing them as simple review tools is a way to expand their use. Although at this point clickers may not fall under the category 'nontraditional instruction,' re-thinking their purpose helps with creative teaching strategies, curriculum designs, and engagement exercises.

Using Role-Playing to Engage ESL Students

Hood College in Frederick, Maryland has a small yet active international student population which is held to the same academic standards as the American student population, including the development of IL skills. The instruction techniques that library staff use to teach students for whom English is a second language (ESL) were no different than those used to teach native English speakers. It took more than four semesters teaching ESL students, using methods that were only marginally successful with native English speakers, before a change was made that placed the international students and their cultures in the center of the IL spotlight.

While the introductory English composition course had not changed its requirements over many years — a six-page research paper addressing both sides of a controversial topic—a complete overhaul of the IL course was undertaken in the fall of 2009. Instead of conversing with only the professor, the librarian sat in on two classes well in advance of the library session. This enabled the librarian to gain valuable insight into the language skills of the students and the level of group cohesiveness among the class and to start forming relationships with students.

Changes to the content came next. A controversial issue that all students could relate to regardless of country of origin needed to be identified in order to increase relevance of the assignment and to engage the students during class. The most logical starting place was college life in America. Finding a relevant controversial topic did not take long: newspapers across the country shared stories about students suffering repercussions because of information they posted to social media web sites.

The next change was developing the appropriate methodology. The previous teaching method had numerous problems: it was centered on the instructor and content, the exercises were static and did not cater to a variety of learning styles, and it did nothing to tie IL skills to the real world. To address these issues the librarian took a lesson from the problem-based learning field and developed a role-playing exercise that would carry through the entire 90-minute session.

Using a news story found during the planning phase, the librarian created a scenario that involved a Hood College student who faced disciplinary procedures for creating and posting an

insulting quiz about one of her professors on Facebook. The librarian and the English professor played the roles of the Academic Disciplinary Hearing Committee, a library student assistant played the role of the defendant, and the ESL students were divided into two teams of lawyers, four acting on behalf of the defendant and four acting on behalf of Hood College. The whole-class brainstorming activity was retained in order to ensure all students had a similar level of understanding of the activity. The database demonstration was removed completely but was supplemented with a dossier of brief, visual guides on how to search and navigate potential electronic resources.

The results were overwhelming. The students quickly figured out that the best way to complete their task would be to divide the work. Each lawyer explored one electronic resource to find supporting evidence for his or her topic, and in total four different databases were used simultaneously. Students learned about constitutional rights and how the first amendment does not apply to private colleges. They learned that Hood and most colleges have codes of conduct that address online and offline behavior and the potential consequences of those behaviors. They learned definitions of legal terms such as defamation and libel, and they also learned how to organize an argument by anticipating the opposition's case. The actual delivery of the evidence gathered by each side turned into a heated debate, and the librarian and professor ended up playing the roles of referees rather than judges!

Throughout the rest of the semester, several students reported that pretending they were lawyers helped them organize their research strategy and their paper. However, there is still room for improvement which could take the form of creating a more elaborate setting, using costuming to a higher degree, and ideally, incorporating the library into the class even more throughout the semester.

TALK AMONGST YOURSELVES: PROBLEM-BASED LEARNING WITH GROUPS

"Problem-based learning is an educational method that uses problems as the starting point for student learning" (Bligh, 1995, p.342). For many students, the concepts and mechanics associated with research projects often provide the context for IL instruction as well as a set of problems for instructors to use in a lesson. Prior to incorporating a PBL approach to instruction, traditional IL sessions were often based on hypothetical topics, questions, and keywords. At most, students could follow along with the librarian on their computers or be provided with personal research time at the end of a session. To encourage more student engagement and genuine learning, a librarian may consider adapting a straightforward or modified PBL approach.

At Utah State University's (USU) Merrill-Cazier Library, an active-learning activity is integrated into all IL sessions. Improving our curriculum and getting greater buy-in from instructors is one of our primary goals, which is why the library instruction program at USU developed PBL lessons for first-year composition classes. A PBL approach to instruction is incorporated when it can be tied directly to in-class assignments.

Neumann University (NU) Library has developed a modified model of PBL that incorporates brief installments of lecture and student-guided modeling. The modifications are made to provide students with new conceptual and mechanical skills required to solve their research problems. First-year English composition classes provide both universities with the opportunity to explore this alternative method of instruction.

First-year English students at USU are brought to the library in the context of working on a persuasive research paper assignment. The librarian creates a PBL lesson with consideration for a variety of research components such as focusing topics, creating a research plan, supporting claims and evidence, and finding sources. To begin, students are asked to address a broad question, such as, "Should fast food restaurants be held accountable for contributing to obesity in America?" The class is then divided into small groups based on students' similar majors or interests. Each group is directed towards a corresponding LibGuide created specifically for the assignment and containing recommended information sources for each of the designated interest groups. Librarians also distribute handouts with three guiding questions that ask students to interact more fully with their topic (see Appendix III).

Group members are given minimal instructions and are encouraged to become responsible for their own learning by engaging with each other and information resources. Each group is asked to identify specific issues related to the general question and to use the LibGuide resources to conduct preliminary research, asking for the librarian's assistance if needed. Each group shares its experiences and teaches search strategies to the class as a whole. Some professors grade the group's bibliography or have the class free-write about their research experience. Based on informal feedback, students prefer PBL lessons to traditional lecture because of their real-world themes and working style.

At NU, completing a successful research project is identified as the problem first-year English students must solve; responses to clicker questions reveal that this is a new experience for many students. Therefore, Neumann's librarians added more structure to the traditional PBL model by introducing new concepts, skills, and tools with brief periods of lecture. Students are given a research plan template (see Appendix IV) to frame the progression of the class, to document personal search strategies, and to share with their instructor. A draft of the plan is completed by the end of class, but first students explore collectively the stages within it and the mechanics of certain tools.

To begin the IL session, students log on to computers and follow along with a projected screen-capture video that demonstrates how to access and select library databases. The class is then given a general but relevant topic, such as "college students" and asked to create a probing question, key word list, and search query, complete with database selection, Boolean operators and limits. The librarian facilitates discussion, noting on a white board and typing student-generated queries to display with a projector. Class-generated, pertinent examples replace

the hypothetical variety of topics that librarians traditionally used. As the result list and its elements are explained by the librarian, students are asked to analyze the list and identify potential sources or possibilities for improvement. Students then turn to their individual plans and often work in pairs to brainstorm ideas and possible keywords. A qualitative survey revealed that students value the actual hands-on activities as important to their understanding. "(A)ctually doing them, being hands on was great" (NU IL-ENG 102 survey, 2010).

CONCLUSION

The collaborating librarians from five institutions agree: the key ingredient to enthusiastic responses from students to library instruction is to step away from the podium, to engage students in active, student-centered, problem based learning, and to take the 'I' out of instruction.

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APPENDIX I

Groove-in limericks, stations, and standards

Limerick	Station	ACRL standard
Hey there, first year Dude and Dudettes. Come on in, are you groovin' yet? We'll give you some clues, You'll be library sleuths. Get real now, get ready, get set.	Sandwich board, outside library	
For your first far out task, make tracks, To find a book in your major from the reference stacks, With book now in tow, to a librarian go, Get your map stamped and get handed some facts.	Reference room	1.1.c
You've been given a book title and name, In the online catalog now search for the same, Write the call number here,_____ Take the stairs, have no fear, Pull that book, hand it in, feel no shame.	OPAC and stacks	2.3.a 2.3.b
Get downstairs now, the hunt must resume Write on your map things you find in the Royer Reading Room. Next, for another room on this level now search, For where the DVDs and videos are perched. Find sticker there, adhere to map, then up to the circ desk zoom.	Children's reading room, Curriculum library, Media room	2.3.c
Next ask the desk attendant for the reserves binder book Read well the procedures, don't just take a look. For the periodicals chase, to the 3rd floor race. Find the clue, make the call, don't get shook.	Circ. desk, Reserves	2.3.a
Just keep on truckin', to the end you must fight. Pick up the yellow phone on the wall, it won't bite. A voice will direct you what to do next The upcoming stop reveals historical Mennonite life.	Periodical room, Mennonite Historical Library	2.3.b

Harold & Wilma Good Library, Goshen College, Goshen, Indiana.

Johnson & Wales Clicker Game board and Sample Question

Johnson & Wales University Library–Charlotte, Charlotte, North Carolina.

APPENDIX III

Creating a Research Plan

What is your topic or problem that you want to research?

_____

1. What do you already know about your topic or issue?	2. What do you need to know in order to better understand your topic or issue? List at least 3 research questions that you will need to explore.	3. For each of your research questions, describe what kind of information source might provide the answer to that question and how you would find that type of information source.

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Neumann U. Research Plan Topic:

Probing Question:

Keywords from question:

Additional Keywords (10):

Appropriate databases (3):

 Database name: _____

 Why do you think this database may be a useful tool?

 Database name: _____

 Why do you think this database may be a useful tool?

 Database name: _____

 Why do you think this database may be a useful tool?

Neumann University Library, Neumann University, Aston, Pennsylvania.