

# WHAT DO NURSING AND CLASSICS HAVE IN COMMON? INNOVATIVE LIBRARY ASSIGNMENTS EMBEDDED IN BLACKBOARD

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For more than five years Xavier University faculty have been using Blackboard to supplement their traditional lecture-based courses and to provide alternative methods of communication and collaboration. Initially, librarians received Blackboard instruction so they could respond to faculty and student questions at the reference desk. Librarians eventually placed links to library resources and services into Blackboard courses in selected academic programs. In May 2006, librarian liaisons met with their respective faculty at the annual Information Fluency Institute to discuss their course design needs with respect to library resources and services. As a result of these discussions, the nursing and classics librarians took advantage of two new Blackboard features, Expo Directory and Team Site, to assist faculty in designing a graduate nursing course and an undergraduate classics course for fall 2006. The resulting collaborations reflect Shank and Dewald's (2003) micro-level library courseware involvement.

The graduate nursing course, Healthcare Informatics, needed a way to demonstrate a student's informatics skills and a graduate level library assignment that utilized critical thinking. As the graduate students in this class were working professionals, the online communication and collaboration features inherent in Blackboard were essential. The nursing course used Expo Directory, the e-portfolio feature in Blackboard, to display documents demonstrating a student's technology and information fluency skills. Students were asked to submit documents that demonstrated their proficiency in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and Excel as well as RefWorks, a bibliographic management service. They were also required to submit email, discussion

board, chat and listserv contributions demonstrating their ability to use these communication and collaboration tools. Although setting up the Expo Directory proved to be straight forward, students had problems uploading the various documents to their e-portfolio. They used a combination of simply typing entries, cutting and pasting text and attaching files. Individual and group consultation sessions, additional online instructions and a second library instruction session were necessary.

The initial library instruction session addressed library information fluency skills such as selecting appropriate nursing research databases, designing effective search strategies, selecting primary research in scholarly journals, outputting search results and obtaining copies of articles from electronic journal collections, print resources or document delivery services. Participation in the initial library instruction session was mandatory and served as proof of these information fluency skills. Prior to this instruction session students were to have completed the first three modules in xu.tutor, the library's online tutorial: (1) Defining the Question, (2) Identifying Resources and (3) Improving a Search. The tutorial modules include text explanations, interactive demos, glossary terms, examples, video clips and quizzes. Students were required to achieve a 70 percent score on the quiz at the end of each of the three xu.tutor modules. Quiz results were automatically sent to the professor.

An evidence-based practice (EBP) tutorial was created and imbedded in the Blackboard course as an advanced library writing assignment. The EBP tutorial provided a definition of evidence-based practice, a video that showed students how to limit search results to articles with a moderate to high level of evidence, the different levels of evidence, a glossary of research and statistical terms and a PICO analysis. Students were asked to find an article demonstrating a moderate to high level of evidence, determine the level of evidence and then write a critical analysis of the article using the PICO analysis form. In

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the PICO analysis students were asked to identify the research question, patient population or problem, intervention, comparative intervention, outcomes, number of participants, research method and potential bias. Students were also asked if the article answered the research question and if they trusted the research in the article. The completed PICO analysis was automatically sent to the professor. An online survey of faculty who used the evidence-based practice tutorial evaluated its effectiveness as a library assignment and provided suggestions for improvement and enhancement. Many faculty felt the PICO analysis and CINAHL video were too long. However, this tutorial proved so popular that a web-based version was created for faculty who were not using Blackboard. In addition, a simplified version was developed for undergraduate students using CINAHL's recently added Evidence-Based Care Sheets.

The undergraduate classics course, Classical Civilization: from Romulus to Octavian (first semester) and from Augustus to Attila (second semester), needed a way to respond to the University's initiative to incorporate team based, problem solving assignments that used new and existing technologies and simulated a global work environment. The course is a popular elective that many freshmen and sophomores take because it counts in several areas toward the core requirements for all students. After the Classics faculty and librarian met to discuss possible assignments, it was decided to use the Wiki Tool in the Blackboard Academic Suite and go with an embedded librarian approach to teaching the course. The students would form groups and create an online Wiki in place of a traditional research paper, and the Classics librarian would sit in on the classes and provide bibliographic instruction and Wiki creation instruction.

Detailed instructions and a timeline were created by the professor and librarian. The timeline helped the students keep on track with their research and group submissions to the Wiki. Each group was required to periodically submit the written portion of their Wiki project to Turnitin Plagiarism Prevention software as well. Each group would also be responsible for evaluating the other groups' Wiki projects. A rubric was created that broke down all aspects of the Wiki project (total number of research resources, citation, spelling and grammar, design aspects, images used, flow of the content, intertextual linking with other groups' Wiki sites, etc. . . ) and assigned point values for varying levels within each category.

Integrated into the regular class lectures, the Classics librarian would conduct basic research instruction and Wiki

creation instruction to the students. Instruction sessions were broken down into 4 basic classes: (1) Using the library catalog to find print materials as well as electronic books and streamed videos, (2) Using subscription subject databases to find citations to journal articles and book chapters, (3) Using an internet search engine to find web sites, photographs, and sound clips, as well as, how to cite resources used to create the Wiki, (4) How to use the Wiki tool in Blackboard. The students were required to complete two modules in xu.tutor, the library's online tutorial: (1) Evaluating Websites, (2) Preventing Plagiarism. The students could use web sites as a resource, but they were required to complete an evaluation rubric and turn these in on the due date of the final Wiki project.

By having the Classics librarian embedded in the course it gave students a face to ask research and Wiki software related questions. The comfort level of students using the library for research grew and they took this basic research knowledge and applied it to other courses. The Wiki project required the students to form groups, pick topics, plan content and structure, and communicate with one another. The Blackboard Wiki tool has a mechanism for checking group participation, which was another requirement. Each member was required to conduct research and submit a portion of the project to the Wiki. It was apparent if all members were not contributing equally. The groups were also responsible for periodically reading the other groups' Wiki sites. The benefits that a Wiki provides are intertextual linking from one site to another, of like or related content. The students were required, if possible, to link to other groups Wiki site if their content related to another site's content.

The final Wiki projects were evaluated by the professor, librarian and each group using the Wiki project evaluation rubric. The group organization proved to be the challenge in this project. Making sure each member was on track and communication of expectations was problematic. The students learned much in the first semester from this project. Not to wait until the last minute to research, and to have periodic, face-to-face meetings with all members of the group to chart progress.

## REFERENCES

- Shank, D. J., & Dewald, N. H. (2003). Establishing our presence in courseware: Adding library services to the virtual classroom. *Information Technology and Libraries*, 22(1), 38-43.