Library Research Basics

THE EVOLUTION OF AN ONLINE INFORMATION LITERACY TUTORIAL

Principles of effective online tutorial pedagogy

Learner-centredness

Learners must have control over learning. Give students the option to choose what they need to learn. In Library Research Basics, individual modules include a syllabus so that students need not waste time covering irrelevant information. There is also an option to close the tutorial at every slide. Individual pages are labeled and easy to select with a "cookie crumb" menu at the bottom of each page.

Barrier free learning

Online learning environments give students the opportunity to explore concepts in their preferred environments (at a time and in a space that they choose). Technology shouldn't be a barrier, but an enhancement. Make sure that the format of the online tutorial is accessible in all browsers. Library Research Basics is presented in Flash.

Adaptability to learning styles

Online learning is adaptable to different learning styles. Students learn …

- 10% of what they read
- 20% of what they hear
- 30% of what they see
- 50% of what they see & hear
- 70% of what they say
- 90% of what they say and do[1]

In combination with a classroom unit, the online information tutorial addresses the need to "do" information literacy. It can accommodate many learning styles, including visual, tactile, active, passive, sequential, sensory and deductive. Online tutorials can adapt to learners' needs in ways that a classroom lecture never will.

Authentic (in context) learning

In large groups, it is almost impossible to satisfy the demand for contextual learning (learning within the information problem). Often, librarians are forced to do a presentation rather than being able to guide students through the resolution of an information problem. Online tutorials have no limit as to how many students can do a hands-on session, thus grounding the learning within an authentic environment.

1. Kolb, D. A. (1984). Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Online Tutorial Content

Module 1:
Search strategies and techniques
- Selecting keywords and concept mapping
- Searching techniques (boolean logic, keywords and phrase searching, truncations etc.)

Module 2:
Introduction to the catalogue
- Searching by author, title, keyword
- Locating materials using call numbers
- Placing holds and obtaining material on reserve
- Managing patron file

Module 3:
Introduction to online database searching
- Identifying and selecting relevant databases
- Locating articles in print or electronically
- Saving and organizing results using the bibliographic manager RefWorks

Lessons Learned

- Put as much time into planning as possible. Double the time you initially estimated to plan and develop the content and make adjustments.

- Assess the tutorial using a monitored environment. Reliable systematic user feedback is essential to making improvements.

- Less is more. Smaller teams work better and content should be scaled back. Reduce the number of search examples, organize content thematically for consistency and flow.

- Perform regular maintenance. Small but regular improvements and updates are more manageable than large overhauls.

- Online tutorials require a long term commitment. Be prepared to commit time and resources on an ongoing basis

Instructional Design and Content Team

Library
Ann Hemingway *Information Literacy Coord.*
Jennifer Dekker *Subject Librarian, Arts*
Cynthia Bail *Systems Librarian*

Centre for e-Learning
Richard Pinet *Director*
Steve Rokeby *Graphic Designer*