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Digital Literacy in Practice: Bringing the Library to the Classroom

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Scaffolding learning with library resources

Librarians are producing new information literacy resources every year, but how effective are they? After the initial induction sessions, do students access and use

these carefully created tutorials, videos, and quizzes? When the librarian is also the lecturer, richer research relationships can develop. This poster demonstrates the

positive influence of embedding library-generated materials in “Digital Literacy”, a 12-week module on the B.Sc. in IT and Organisations.

Students wrote two essays, due in weeks 6 and 12. They were asked to reflect on their use of the library’s “Information Skills Resource” materials at three points—at weeks 7, 9, and 12. Here is a sample of their reflective journal entries:

Week 7 journal prompt

- . How did you prepare to complete the assignment?
- . What steps did you take to find your sources?
- . Did you review any of the Information Skills Resource tutorials we have covered in class?
- . Did you encounter any difficulties while writing your essay? How did you overcome those difficulties?

Student A’s entry

Firstly i tried to understand what the assignment is all about, think about the aims of the assignment and how to go on about it.

I used different search engines to find sources for the assignment as well as the star-plus.

No i did not review any of the information Skills Resource tutorials we covered in class.

I am finding it a bit difficult using star-plus main reason is i missed the class week three which was when we had Brenda teaching how to use star-plus. Am trying to use star-plus more now to try and familiarise myself more.

Week 9 journal prompt

- . How will you prepare to research your topic?
- . Will you review any of the tutorials we have covered in class? These include: Evaluating Information, Databases Explained, Referencing, Plagiarism, and Effective Internet Searching.
- . How will you go about planning your outline?

Student B’s entry

mainly i will be using the internet and using a different combinations of words and phrases to do my search i will search for books and journals that are relevant. I will use the information resources to help me and guide through the different ways to search the internet effectively and will also using to help with reference and avoid plagiarism

i will decide what it im going to dicuss and use relevant references related to my topic

i will decide in which order im going to write about the subjects and how im going to structure the essay

Week 12 journal prompt

- . What is your understanding of “digital literacy”?
- . Do you feel your digital literacy has improved during the module?
- . Did you review any of the Information Skills Resource tutorials that we covered in class?

Student C’s entry

My research skills have improved greatly. I know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it. I have learnt that digital literacy is not only computer skills or information skills. Digital literacy is the ability to access digital sources and use them effectively.

To research the essay topic, I mainly used Starplus; initially I found a number of sources to consider, then I evaluate them and chose about 15 to read. I reviewed Evaluating Information and Effective Internet searching tutorials, which was very helpful.

To cite sources correctly and write the bibliography, I repeatedly reviewed Referencing for the Information School (Harvard) tutorial, which was a great support.

Conclusions

As indicated in the journal prompts, several items from the library’s “Information Skills Resource” were embedded in the module, and students had dedicated time in class to work in a scaffolded environment (Raes, Schellens, De Wever, & Vanderhoven, 2012). In the final essay, all three students received marks that were significantly higher than those received at the beginning of the semester. While other factors were undoubtedly involved, it seems likely that reinforcing the use of library materials (Saunders, 2012) through reflection helped students consolidate their learning.

References

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