



INSTRUCTIONAL DIVERSITY

A blended model for
sustainable IL programming

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MacEwan University Library



- 11, 000 students
- Three campuses

MacEwan University is an urban, undergraduate university in Edmonton, Alberta, offering a wide variety of diplomas and baccalaureate degrees to over 11,000 students across three campuses. The City Centre Library is situated at the heart of our main campus in downtown Edmonton.

Our namesake, Dr. J.W. Grant MacEwan was Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta and a pioneer advocate for environmental sustainability.

MacEwan University's downtown campus is built on a reclaimed railbed, and our library is on the third block of a five block long campus.

One of the key mandates of the MacEwan University Library is teaching information literacy and critical thinking skills to students. Library Instruction for first year English courses, is and has been at the core of our information literacy program.

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Information Literacy Instruction Program



- 160 sessions
- 1 Librarian
- New mandate

We teach approximately 160 English Library Instruction sessions each year, but have one English Subject Specialist – Joan. Fall instruction is an incredibly busy time, and it would not be possible for me to personally teach the 90 fall term library instruction sessions alone. Prior to 2013 we relied on a complement of sessional librarians to share this teaching load. In addition to receiving face-to-face instruction from the library, students in these 160 English classes also completed a mandatory, for credit, online IL tutorial through their course learning management system, which in our case is Blackboard. Note: Much of the content included in the face-to-face sessions was duplicated in the online tutorial.

In early 2013, our Library instruction team was challenged to create a more sustainable model for our Information Literacy programming. Our instruction team began looking in the library literature and at other institutions for successful models for sustainable information literacy instruction, with the following knowledge in hand:

1. We needed a sustainable model that could be managed by one Librarian. We had not yet mastered cloning.
2. Our sustainable model would rely on online tutorials.
3. We did not want to lose the personal relationship Joan has with faculty & students
4. Based on the results of a large scale assessment project of our IL English program we knew that students were struggling, not with finding sources, but with evaluating the information they were finding. This is where they needed us the most.
5. Our new Learning Commons librarian had a vision for student self-directed learning. She was keen to be involved in offering drop-in workshops & programming to support IL.

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Hybrid: “4 points of contact blended model”



- Meet Joan
- Tutorial
- Activity
- Workshop

Our Goal: to create a sustainable IL instruction model that could be managed by our instruction team, reduce duplication of content and effort, incorporate both online and in-person instruction and promote self-directed learning opportunities through a new Learning Commons.

After looking at a few different models for blended instruction in academic libraries, we developed a multi-pronged or hybrid model for sustainable IL instruction, whatever you wish to call it, we affectionately refer to our new model as the “4 points of contact blended model” and it is a mix of online, face-to-face, required, drop-in, in-class & library time...

In our new 4 points model, students have the opportunity to:

1. Meet Joan early in the semester.
2. Complete an online IL tutorial.
3. work together on a hands-on in-class learning activity facilitated by Joan.
4. Attend drop-in workshops in the Library’s Learning Commons.



In Fall 2013 we began rolling it out this new “4 Point of Contact Blended Model” with the English Department, with a goal of 25% uptake. I (Joan) began with an ‘early adopter’ model described in the work of Jennifer Kelly’s in “Off the shelf and out of the box.” This model asks faculty to volunteer to try out the new model and offer feedback. In late summer as I started getting requests for fall instruction I met with my English faculty one-on-one, described the model explained the benefits and asked if they were willing to try it. This bit was labour intensive, but it is only done once as they are working on their course syllabi and place each of the 4 points of contact at the appropriate date in the course.

The Instructors are especially excited about seeing how students get multiple points of contact reinforcing key skills and how we are building a MacEwan culture of self- directed learning through the Learning Commons and tutorials.

In the first term I had a goal of 25% implementation but got 42% buy in. Indulge me as I use a gardening metaphor to to describe our model and its implementation:

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Preparing the ground (1st point of contact)




- 5 minutes
- In-class
- Expectations
- Getting help

You need fertile soil to grow anything. We have all met students who don't know about the library or its value, even very late in their first term. In our first point of contact we wanted to give the students an early introduction to who their Librarian is, and with the multiple points of contact through the model they will recognize their Librarian as they begin the next step, the tutorial. The goal was to meet students early in the semester and do a 5-minute classroom visit to introduce students to library services and upcoming IL learning expectations & opportunities.

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Planting the seeds (2nd point of contact)



- IL tutorial
- Self-enroll
- 3-5% of grade
- Certificate of completion


Our second point of contact is an online, modularized, interactive IL tutorial. This tutorial is completed by first-year students for 3-5% credit in their final grade in their English courses. And it is as they work through the tutorial modules that the seeds of IL concepts and skills are planted. The tutorial, which we still call SearchPath, is built using Adobe Captivate, and roughly modeled on the old Western Michigan State University's SearchPath. It is composed of 5 modules, with 2-5 interactive learning objects. Students self enroll in the tutorial through our University's Learning Management System the can generate a certificate of completion of they watch all the tutorial and have a grade of over 80%. Jody our instructional design librarian will talk about best practices & give you a sneak peak...

Following best practices each of these learning objects is short, includes interactive elements such as clicking, typing & quizzing components, and is linked to a specific learning outcome in the old ACRL framework - standard for IL in higher education. Being as it is an online tutorial - we are able to meet the IL needs of both onsite and online students. Because one of the goals of our 4 point model was to maintain and cultivate relationships between students & the library - & their librarian for English - we have also personalized the tutorial in part through including an an 30second welcome video featuring Joan!

Note that the individual videos from this modularized tutorial are also embedded in key locations on our library website for point-of-need learning and instruction, and are also creative commons licensed, and openly available for taking, using and adapting.

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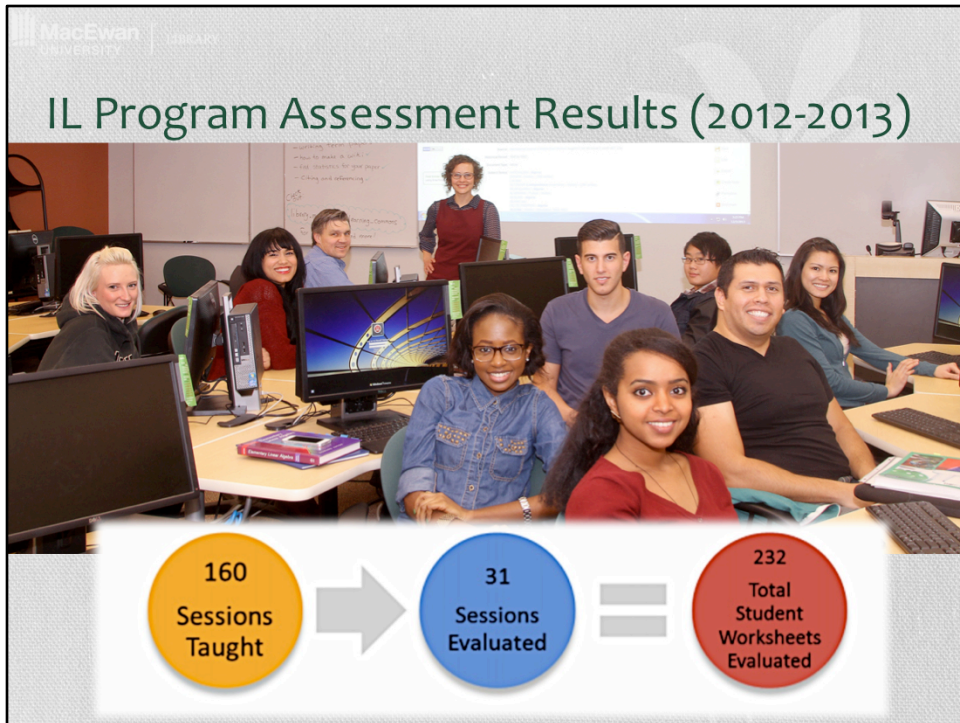
Feeding & Weeding (3rd point of contact)



- In-class
- Hands-on
- Evaluate articles
- Based on IL Program Assessment

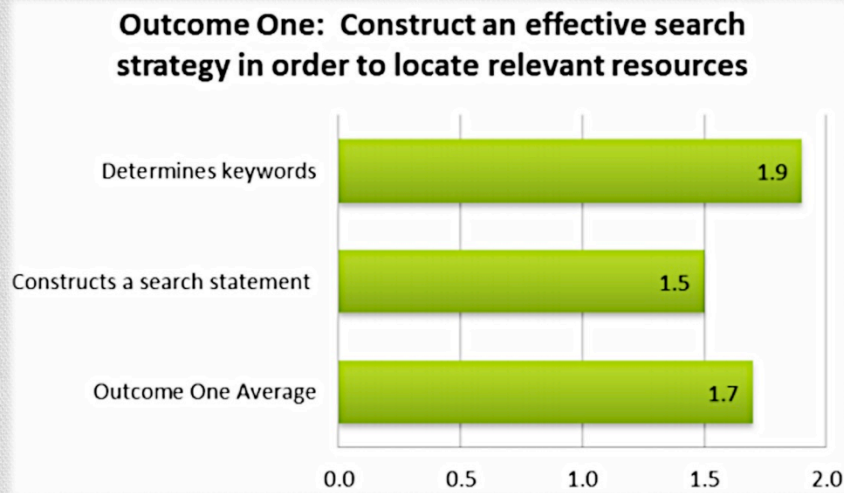
Here the students learn how to weed out bad information sources. But students need to be able to recognize the weeds. In this class visit I engage students with a no-tech, hands-on learning activity, designed to develop essential critical- thinking and source evaluation skills. I visit their class with a set of folders with printouts of information from ebooks, articles and the open internet all on a particular hot topic. Students work in small groups to determine which source would be appropriate to use in a university level research paper and justify their decisions. This activity was designed based on the results of our wide scale English Assessment research project.

During the 2012-2013 academic year we undertook an evaluation of student learning in first year English library sessions. Note that these were traditional 60-90 minute library sessions in which instructors brought their students to the library's instruction lab. Our Chair, Jessica Knoch who led the assessment team had attended ACRL Assessment Immersion lead by Megan Oakleaf. We employed an authentic assessment tool in the form of a student worksheet completed during the library session. Where student permission was received, we anonymized the worksheets and then scored them independently using a rubric to evaluate our two learning outcomes.



We were fortunate in this assessment project in that we actually had a fairly large data set to work with. Over the course of the year we evaluated 31 of our 160 library instruction sessions. We collected 232 usable student worksheets that we could then assess. Our rubric was developed on models produced via Project Rails, and was standardized by the group. Our rubric scored student worksheets on two outcomes: the first pertaining to the construction of a keyword search strategy, and the second learning outcome pertained to selecting and evaluating articles retrieved in their database search.

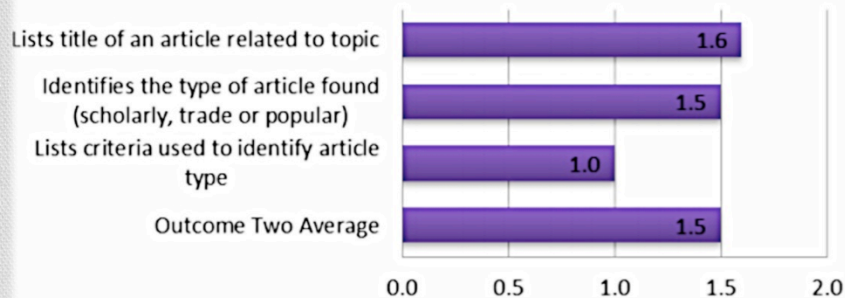
IL Program Assessment Results (2012-13)



Outcome 1 involved constructing an effective search strategy to locate relevant results; we were happy with the results on outcome 1. We were surprised to see high scores for retrieving relevant articles, perhaps in spite of the search strategy employed.

IL Program Assessment Results (2012-13)

Outcome Two: Identify Resources in order to determine which are most relevant for the assignment




Outcome 2 pertained to evaluating resources found – students were asked to select a relevant article, identify the type of article, and list criteria used to determine type.

We observed low scores for identifying type of article and listing criteria used to identify article type. We were particularly disappointed with this low score, because the critical thinking skills necessary for article evaluation were not being broadly demonstrated.

It was this particular low score – the lowest on our rubric – that informed our decision regarding our third point of contact learning activity. We asked ourselves: if we have one opportunity guaranteed to meet with these students for face-to-face instruction what do they most need to learn? And the answer was clear: evaluating the results they were finding, to determine quality, purpose and relevance.

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U-pick Harvest (4th point of contact)



- Drop-in
- *Guarantee*
- 40 sessions
- 244 students attended!
- (+2 online)

Our final point of contact had a reasonably bountiful harvest! 244 students attended our drop in Research Essentials Workshops in the Learning Commons.

We offered approximately 40 drop-in hands-on workshops throughout the year in the library computer lab. These sessions fit with our Library's Learning Commons vision for student-directed learning. Our guarantee: We promise, come with your research questions, leave with your virtual hands full of virtual sources. In addition to the 244 students who attended in person, we had 2 students attend our drop-in online workshop that we offered for the first-time in the Spring semester this past June.

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Hands-on article evaluation activity



- Usefulness?
- Variations?
- Challenges?
- Suggestions?

Time for you to get your hands dirty! We are sharing with you the materials we used in our evaluating sources activity. When we use this activity in our third point with a class of students, students are divided into small groups; each group is given exactly the same folder – so we would be looking at one topic - they are given 8 minutes to look over the contents of the folder using the essay question to help them determine what they think is the best source, & then justify their choices to the class as a whole. Normally the whole activity takes about 30 minutes.

How might you see your self using or adapting this? What do you see as some challenges? Do you have any suggestions for us?

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Weighing in: Observations & feedback



- ILAAP results
- Informal correlations
- Anecdotal feedback



And how do our four points stack up against traditional library instruction?

It is still very early days, as our new model was being piloted for the first time. Our most robust evaluation of any one aspect of the model took place at our '3rd Point of Contact,' the hands on article evaluation activity. We opted to evaluate students using the ILAAP questionnaire, a provincially developed information literacy assessment tool with questions tied directly to the old ACRL standards.

For the other three points we relied on some observed correlations and solicited and unsolicited feedback from students and faculty as well as librarians involved in the model, to help us evaluate the effectiveness.

What worked...

- Faculty embraced model of self-directed learning.
- Less prep time!
- Students meet Librarian earlier.
- Perceived impact of tutorial on assignments.
- Excellent feedback on evaluation activity.
- Students loved the workshops!
- From online students:

“very concise & helpful”

“specifically what I was looking for”



Faculty embraced the model of self-directed learning. Five years ago our university moved from a community college to a university, and faculty see this self-directed model as more appropriate for university undergraduate level education. There was also less prep time for Librarians! In fact – our 3rd & 4th points require no prep for librarians to teach, and we were able to draw upon a pool of 11 librarians to step in & help out when needed! English instructors loved that students meet the Librarian earlier in the semester. Students learn about subject specialist librarians - that there is a place to go for help. As we were looking for instructors to be early adopters of this new model, this 1st point of contact was a big selling feature, right away they saw the benefit of giving Students multiple contact opportunities with the library / librarian. We overheard that our goal of personalizing the online tutorial worked! When students whispered: “hey, that’s Joan... from SearchPath!”

We had excellent feedback on the article-evaluation activity from English faculty AND librarians, and we also have the ILAAP data. ILAAP Questionnaires were completed by 740 students in MacEwan first year English. Of the students who completed the questionnaire 80% of students could correctly select the best keywords for a specified topic – which reinforced to us the value of the online tutorial - and 88% demonstrated an ability to correctly recognize the qualities of a scholarly article – which is good, because that the activity they completed moments before, clicked for them! Students loved the drop-in workshops! We did get written feedback online for our 3 workshops offered for the first time this spring. Students said: “very concise & helpful”; “gave me specifically what I was looking for”.

What didn't work...

- Some students did not complete tutorial.
- Challenges around scheduling, marketing, communicating drop-in workshops.
- Many students did not attend drop-in workshops.
- Missed some students...
who may have really needed help.



Unfortunately, some students did not complete tutorial. We also experienced challenges around scheduling, marketing, communicating drop-in workshops. And many students did not / were not able to attend drop-in research sessions, so we know we missed some students who may have really needed help.

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Pruning & Transplanting



- Scheduling
- Proof of attendance
- Marketing
- Modifying & implementing for 4+ other disciplines.

We will have full implementation of this 4-point model for English 111 and 102 in fall 2014. We have learned from our experiences of the past year, and have made changes. Marketing, communicating & getting students to attend drop-in workshops has possibly been our biggest challenge. We have a newly re-designed proof of attendance 'bookmark' for in-person / online workshops, and we are working with University marketing and the graphic designer on creating new posters and handouts.

We knew that some sessions were poorly attended, but now I have 3 academic terms worth of statistics to look at and hope to have a fall schedule for workshops that better meets student need. In previous terms we started workshops in late September, but we did not get significant student attendance until mid October. We are also offering evening drop-in sessions, and, after a successful pilot this spring, we will also be offering drop-in workshops *online* for our online students and those who can't make it in during the day.

We are also transplanting this model to be applied to other disciplines. Piloting modified blended models for 100 level Nursing, Psychology, History & Classics students. In History & Classics our subject specialist will not be using the hands-on article evaluation activity - nor will she be offering that follow-up class visit. Instead at the appropriate point in the semester she will be embedded in the online course on the university LMS - offering research support.

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Discussion: Blended IL instruction models



- Thoughts?
- Variations?
- Challenges?
- Suggestions?

Opportunity for feedback.

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Questions?



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