

Background

In Spring 2014, the MacEwan library began preparing, adapting and migrating content for self-enroll information literacy tutorials for English, Nursing, Psychology, History and Classics. These tutorials are available via the self-enroll course catalog in our institutional LMS and - with the exception of History - are attached to specific courses and promoted to students by course instructors and / or subject librarians. Certain courses see a majority of students electing to self-enroll in the promoted library tutorial, while others see significantly lower rates of self-enrollment.

This poster shares results of our investigation into how a faculty member’s course-level communication and student-motivation strategies may influence rates of student enrollment and completion in the self-enroll tutorials. We also share the stories of our best strategies for garnering faculty support and investment.

Tutorial Adoption Narratives

ENGLISH

An online IL tutorial has long been part of 100-level English courses - copied into individual LMS course shells by English faculty. In 2014, the library proposed a streamlined model wherein students would self-enroll into a single LMS tutorial “course” owned by the library. This enhanced library access to tutorial data, improved version control and simplified troubleshooting. Supported by the English department chair, librarians presented faculty with a range of venues to provide feedback, and tweaks were made as the new model was piloted and then adopted by all. Presently, faculty set a common pass grade for students confirmed by a LMS-generated ‘certificate of completion.’ They can nevertheless personalise the model by assigning up to 5% course credit for completing the tutorial and selecting a due date within a set period.

PSYCHOLOGY

In the mid 2000s, the Psychology department and library began work on a research tutorial, mapping out content prior to the project stalling. The project was revisited in 2014, however, with the library proposing to see it through to fruition: adapting the content, building the tutorial, and owning the self-enroll course in the LMS. Keenly supported by the Psychology chair, the tutorial launched in fall 2014 and was piloted in select 100- and 300-level courses. A collective decision was subsequently made by the participating librarians and Psychology faculty and chair to formally house the tutorial within the 200-level ‘Introduction to Research Methods in Psychology’ course, where it is now required content.

NURSING

Although liaison responsibility for Nursing switched hands twice in 2014, the implementation of a second-year Nursing tutorial was smooth and highly successful. Much of the credit can be assigned to the former, long-term Nursing librarian who had a history of working collaboratively with the Nursing department on the integration of IL outcomes into the curriculum. While the tutorial content itself was developed and implemented by an interim librarian, the Nursing librarian had proposed content specifically targeting the research assignment embedded in the 200-level course. The tutorial enables students to develop skills and knowledge to complete their assignment while ensuring that faculty, ever pressed for sufficient instruction time, do not have to give up additional class time for in-person IL instruction.

CLASSICS

The Classics tutorial was built by the library with the intention to augment or even replace library instruction in foundational courses. The tutorial, which was not tied to any specific course or faculty instructor, was broadly promoted to students in several courses, and initially saw little uptake or use by students. After leveraging a personal connection, however, the librarians found a faculty champion and worked closely with them to enhance the content. As the faculty’s investment in the tutorial grew, they opted to pilot the tutorial in winter 2016 as assigned coursework in one of their 200-level courses. As the term closes, the faculty member has expressed satisfaction with the experience as facilitated by the librarians and is considering the use of this tutorial in one of their 100-level courses as well.

COMPLETION RATES & ENROLLMENT (%) BY DISCIPLINE



Results

CORRELATION OF FACULTY MESSAGING TO ENROLLMENT & COMPLETION RATES (HIGH TO LOW)

Enrollment rates	Completion if enrolled	Instructor comments to students	Themes
Greater than 90%	Greater than 90%	“vital to [...] assignments & throughout their careers” “approachable, [...]simple to self enroll, low stress, easy marks.” “[essential skills for] course's culminating assignment, a research essay.” “it is probably the easiest 2.5% they will earn in the course”	•Emphasis on easy credit & marks. •Ease of use, accessibility, low stress. •Confidence/skill for assignment success.
80-90%	Greater than 90%	“heartily suggest they attend.” “an exercise to familiarize [...] library research resources”	•Positive promotional messages/cues. •No emphasis on credit or marks.
80-90%	70-80%	“I describe it as vital knowledge that they will need in order to complete the written assignment”	•No course grade assigned. •Confidence/skill for assignment success. •Not part of blended model.
70-80%	70-80%	“importance of the tutorial to the work done in my course and ...subsequent courses.”	•Positive promotional messages/cues. •Confidence/skill for assignment success. •No emphasis on credit or marks.

Discussion

Research on online tutorial completion points to the effectiveness of extrinsic motivators, such as course credit of 5%, a theme certainly born out in our current study. We also found that effectiveness does not seem to depend on the *amount* of course grade given: *As little as 1% can be very effective.*

In our analysis of faculty messaging, we noted several themes tied to higher rates of enrollment and completion: intrinsic motivation messages centering around relevance to and confidence for course assignments, and extrinsic motivation messages focusing on easy grades, or a combination of the two, as articulated by one of our faculty survey respondents:

I explain that the [...] tutorial helps students cultivate the research skills that are essential for the course's culminating assignment, a research essay. [...] I also tell students that [it] is probably the easiest 2.5% they will earn in the course [...]. This combination of pedagogical and grade-based incentives seems to work well.

Student comments gathered in a tutorial usability study conducted by the MacEwan Library earlier this year echoed these themes:

“It is not the most interesting topic, in my opinion, but it is very useful and helpful” (Psychology)

Our conclusion is that this student’s sentiments are representative – and that while most of our students do find the content useful, we still need the additional extrinsic motivation provided by even a small amount of course credit - to give them another reason to show up!

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