Experiments in Information Literacy

The Libraries’ d'Arbeloff Project

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Outline

- The Challenge
- d’Arbeloff Fund for Excellence in Education
- Who are the students who take 3.091?
- 3.093: Information Exploration – Becoming a Savvy Scholar
- Next Steps
Our Challenge

- How to reach a vast majority of first year undergraduates?
- How to do this without burdening staff?
- How to do this without taking away from the already established subject specialist responsibilities?
d’Arbeloff Fund for Excellence in Education

- Call for proposals mentioned libraries
- Library involvement in 3.091: Introduction to Solid State Chemistry in Fall 2005:
  - Led by Prof Donald Sadoway
  - 17 librarians in 27 recitation sections
- How to provide the same level of instruction to a large number of students and have it be meaningful?
d’Arbeloff Fund for Excellence in Education – Our strategy

- Modify assignments in 3.091 to incorporate information use
- Create online tutorials or modules to be viewed by the students on their timeline
- Use students to help create the content
d’Arbeloff Fund for Excellence in Education

- SUCCESS!
- Funding granted December 2005/January 2006
- Majority of funds used to hire temporary staff
- Spring/summer 2006
  - How to integrate into 3.091?
  - Creation of online tutorials
What developed

- Discussions about scalability, impact
- THIS IS AN EXPERIMENT! 😊
  - 3 credit course to learn more about the students, their habits, and their needs
  - Run it in parallel to 3.091 to mimic integration in the course
  - Approved by Committee on the Undergraduate Program (CUP)
3.091/3.093 self assessment survey

During your senior year in high school, how often did you use:

- EndNote, RefWorks, or other software to manage your citations
- Article databases such as InfoTrac, Proquest, or Web of Science to find articles on a topic
- Online catalogs in high school or public library
- Google or another search engine
During your senior year in high school, how often did you use:

- Instant Messaging (IM) to ask a teacher or librarian for help
- A PDA for completing homework assignments
- A PDA for searching the internet
- A Laptop for your coursework
During your senior year in high school, how often did you visit:

- Your public library
- Your high school library

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>High School Library</th>
<th>Public Library</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 - Very Often</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - Often</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 - Sometimes</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - Rarely</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - Never</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.093 – Information Exploration: Becoming a Savvy Scholar

■ The course:
  □ Lecture
  □ Tutorial review
  □ Assignments
  □ Research Logs

■ The tutorials
3.093 – Information Exploration: Becoming a Savvy Scholar

- Assessment and Feedback
  - Assignments, tutorial feedback, research log
  - Card sorting exercise
  - Course evaluations
  - Pre/post self-confidence survey
3.093 Self-Assessment

Confidence Level

1 - Not Confident to 5 - Very Confident

- Use Google or another search engine to find materials quickly and efficiently
- Use online library catalogs to find materials quickly and efficiently
- Use article databases such as InfoTrac, ProQuest, or Web of Science to find materials quickly and efficiently
- Use MIT’s library web page to access the materials you need
- Use call numbers to find books (and other materials) on library shelves
- Understand when to cite others’ contributions to your research

Pre-3.093
Post-3.093
3.093 Self-Assessment

Confidence Level

1 - Not Confident to 5 - Very Confident

Understand how to cite others' contributions to your research

Recognize the parts of a citation

Understand the different types of information that can be found in encyclopedias, handbooks, journals, books, or other types of materials

Know the difference between the major Boolean operators (And, Or, Not) and how to use them correctly

Use EndNote, RefWorks (or some other software) for managing references and citations

Understand the difference between primary and secondary sources

Pre-3.093

Post-3.093
3.093 Self-Assessment

Confidence Level

1 - Not Confident to 5 - Very Confident

- Understand the scientific publication cycle
- Understand the meaning of plagiarism
- Know how to contact library staff for assistance
- Critically evaluate information that you find, regardless of the source (print, electronic, video, etc.)
- Know which MIT Library to use to do research on a particular topic
- Know how to access both print and online library resources (e.g., books, journals, and full text articles and databases)

[Chart showing confidence levels pre and post 3.093 for each competency]
Student feedback

- “Actual assignments for which we must physically visit libraries and for good search queries are essential.”

- “covered what I wanted to learn – where to look to find the best information quickly”

- “The content wasn’t incredibly fascinating but is necessary to perform high quality scholarly research.”
Student feedback

““I’m confident that this material will make the rest of my research at MIT much easier”

“Thank you. I learned a great deal in this class, and I hope that everyone can have access to these resources.”
Survey of 3.093 students – May 2007

- 5 of 12 students responded
- 5/5 took at least 1 course that required some library research (Communication Intensive)
- 4/5 used skills from 3.093
- “I’m only recently discovering how useful the class was, now that I have begun to use vera/barton more regularly to review current research in my field for my UROP and other projects.”
What’s next?

- Second year of funding
  - Hire a postdoc TA
- Create, modify, update tutorial modules
- Determine assessment methods
  - Pre/post tests
  - Assignments?
Links of interest

- Tutorials

- OpenCourseWare (OCW) page
Research and Instructional Support Group (RISG) Spring Seminar

Learn more about what happened in 3.093 and join in a discussion.

When: Tuesday June 5
Time: 2:30-4pm
Place: 16-160
Questions?