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Buy Low, Sell High, Get in Now: Low-Stakes/Low-Investment Information Literacy Initiatives Pay Off Big

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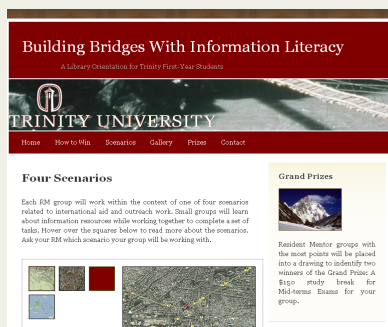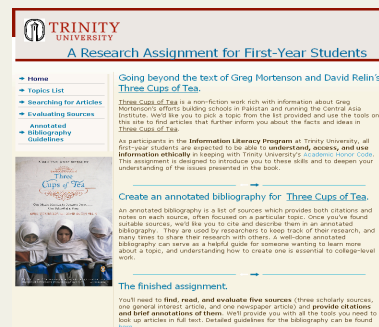
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Buy Low, Sell High, Get in Now: Low-Stakes/Low-Investment Information Literacy Initiatives Pay Off Big – Hoover, Donald, Wilson, Trinity University

## Connecting a First-Year Summer Reading Assignment to a New Student Library Orientation

Faculty and Student Life leaders proposed an information literacy assignment to accompany Trinity's summer reading selection, *Three Cups of Tea*. The result was a substantial annotated bibliography to be completed over the summer by first-year students, and turned in to both student life staff and to First-Year Experience faculty.

The summer reading text was connected to the library orientation by emphasizing the themes of informed inquiry and social engagement, with a library information source at the center of each orientation task. Web 2.0 technology (online media & quizzes) was used to reach students before arriving on campus and after completing the orientation activities.

Library orientation outcomes included positive affect goals and an introduction to services, staff, and resources, with a special effort to engage the Resident Mentors as library role models and to utilize the social bonds formed by the Resident Mentor groups to model ideal information behaviors and attitudes.

The First-Year Summer Reading Assignment created heightened awareness of campus wide Information Literacy Objectives which led to opportunities for librarians in their liaison duties.
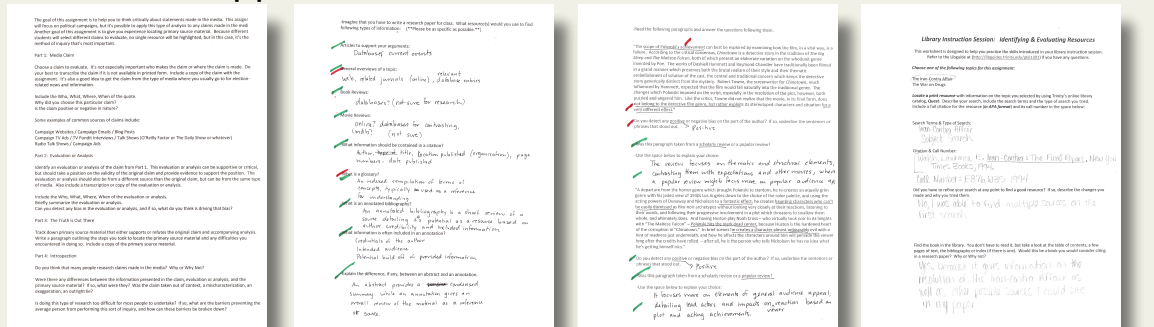
Evaluated by faculty for a small percentage of overall grade.

Evaluated by librarian, but not for course credit.

Evaluated by librarian, but not for course credit.

Evaluated by librarian, counted as participation grade.

Librarians were able to use the success of the First-Year Summer Reading Assignment as leverage to propose new low-stakes/low-investment collaborations with faculty members during the Fall Semester. Three such collaborations with faculty members in the political science department resulted in librarian-created information literacy assignments that built upon skills introduced in the summer program. All of the assignments had a high completion rate.
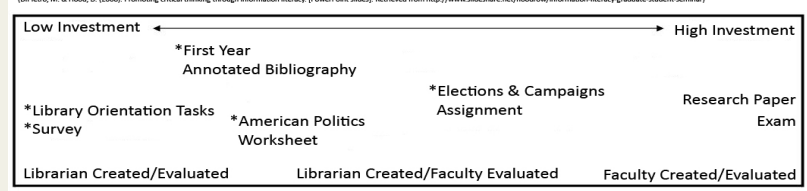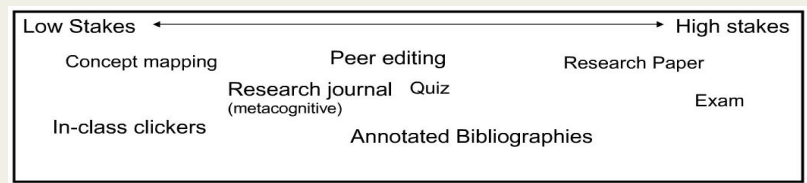
The Pay Off

Immediate Successes

- 400 summer *annotated bibliographies* completed
- 95% completion rate for New Student Orientation tasks
- Positive first impressions of library and research process
- Visibility of project acts as conversation opener with faculty
- New information literacy assignments in first-year courses
- Relationship with campus entities and Orientation program expanded

Long Term Opportunities

- Participation in *Summer Reading* assignment established
- Tie-in with Trinity's IL program and first-year goals
- IL in extracurricular context demonstrated
- Low stakes, low risk can prime students for higher order IL
- Low investment, high completion rate inspires new collaborations
- New opportunity for higher stakes collaborations with faculty

Low Stakes Assignments

Drawn from Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) literature. See Peter Elbow (1997).

- Informal
- Low anxiety, less risk
- Little or no effect on grade
- Engaging, active learning situations
- Prepare students for higher stakes (graded) projects

Elbow, P. (1997). High stakes and low stakes in assigning and responding to writing. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning, 69*, 5-13.

Low Stakes ←————————————→ High stakes
Concept mapping   Peer editing
Research journal   Quiz   Research Paper
(metacognitive)
In-class clickers   Exam
Annotated Bibliographies

(DiPietro, M. & Hood, D. (2008). Promoting critical thinking through information literacy. [PowerPoint slides]. Retrieved from http://www.slideshare.net/hoodrow/information-literacy-graduate-student-seminar)

Low Investment ←————————————→ High Investment
*First Year
Annotated Bibliography
*Library Orientation Tasks   *Elections & Campaigns
*Survey   Assignment   Research Paper
*American Politics   Exam
Worksheet
Librarian Created/Evaluated   Librarian Created/Faculty Evaluated   Faculty Created/Evaluated

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