

REINVENTING LIBRARY INSTRUCTION: THE IVY TECH STORY

by Susan Mannan and Jessica Placke



INTRODUCTION

Most academic libraries have been involved in formal library instruction for as long as we can remember, and most likely we are all in that continuous quality improvement mode of always trying to do it better. Ivy Tech Community College-Central Indiana Region is no different. After years of delivering the standard show and tell version of “what our library has for you,” a spurt of fast-paced enrollment growth, library growth and staffing changes put the traditional instructional program into disarray. Library staff took the opportunity to evaluate what was being done and reorient the growing program. This article gives a brief review of our past efforts at library class instruction and then describes our recent activities and plans to improve and diversify what we do.

PREVIOUS LIBRARY INSTRUCTION PROGRAM

The Ivy Tech-Central Indiana Library has always offered instructional classes for any faculty who requested or agreed to bring his or her class to the library. A large part of this instruction was given to the English Composition and College Study Skills classes. For example, of the 358 classes taught in 2005/2006, 60% were core English classes, and 8% were Ivy 070, the College Life & Success (study skills) course. While librarians had developed standardized presentations for these courses, tremendous work went into scheduling

and teaching the large number of these classes that visited the library. The remaining third of the instructional classes done in 2005/2006 were presentations designed especially for program level courses. Librarians devoted considerable time and energy to developing targeted resource materials and presentations for classes in areas as diverse as Early Childhood Development, Nursing, Respiratory Therapy, Culinary Arts, Business, Psychology, Sociology, Speech, American History, and Arts and Culture.

It has always been the desire of the library to reach all of the English classes each semester. A few years ago the library was able to insert a required one hour library instruction session into the English Department’s course syllabus. This ensured that almost 100% of these classes made the visit. The library also wanted to give instruction to as many other program area classes as was possible, given its staffing constraints; but this became increasingly difficult to do because of the tremendous growth Ivy Tech began to experience in recent years. From the fall of 1997 to the spring of 2006, enrollment almost doubled from 7,261 to 13,818 students.

The charts below (Figures 1 and 2) depict the impact that the enrollment growth at the College had on the library instruction program. Looking back to the 1997-98 academic year, librarians at Ivy Tech-Central Indiana taught 232 classes, seeing 1,721 students. By

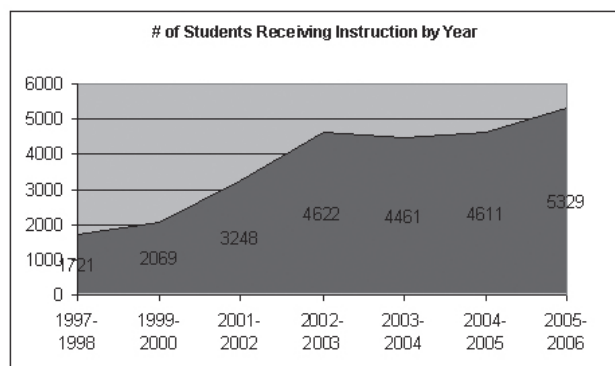


Figure 1

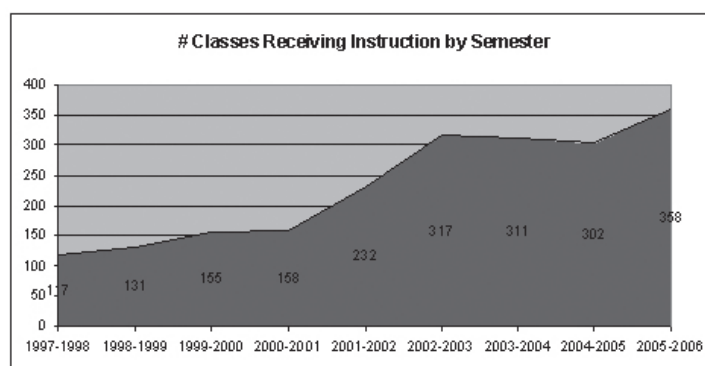


Figure 2

the 2005/2006 academic year, the class number had increased to 358, covering 5,329 students.

Not only did the library have to cope with sheer growth in numbers, it was growing otherwise as well. In 2002, a departmental library was established in the new Public Safety Building, on the developing Lawrence campus on the east side of Indianapolis, to serve the Fire Science and related programs. The Lawrence location was targeted to become a second major campus for Ivy Tech-Central Indiana. Renovation of a large new building was completed in 2004, and a second brand new full-service library was opened there that fall, ten miles from the main downtown location. This had the effect of doubling the number of libraries, the staff, and the budget, and sizably increasing the collection all in one year. For library instruction, this now meant coordinating a growing number of sessions spread across two campuses and three libraries, delivered by a largely new staff of librarians. And just as this was happening, the existing main-stay librarian of the instructional program retired. Now instead of one or two librarians carrying out the library instructional program, there were suddenly eight to ten. A further complicating factor was the frequent turnover experience in the part-time ranks of this group.

WHY MAKE CHANGES?

It became clear for several reasons that business as usual would not be an effective approach to library instruction. In the Fall of 2004, as a new “lead instructional librarian” was hired, the library instruction program was targeted for change. Evaluation and reflection had shown that the instruction sessions for English, Ivy 070, and subject-specific classes each posed special challenges. Instructional sessions for English and Ivy 070 often focused on specific library sources needed for an assignment to the detriment of broader literacy concepts. Also, the library classes for different course levels (developmental, basic, and advanced English) often covered the same material. A student who progressed through the English core classes could potentially attend library instruction three times and see almost the same presentation each time.

At the same time, students expressed frustration that subject-specific instruction classes sometimes seemed hit-and-miss. It was common in any given class that some students could have attended multiple library instruction sessions while others had not been to the library before. Because of this, librarians were not always able to focus on advanced topics in the program/subject instructional classes.

Based on these concerns, goals for a new instructional program were created. There were several elements to the new plan. First there was the need to create some consistency in the instruction delivered in

the core English classes by a number of librarians at three different sites. Second, there was a need to create an overarching, comprehensive plan that would take students from the study skills and developmental English courses through the advanced levels, reducing repetition and instead, building on concepts. There was a similar need to build in consistency and a historical record of what was developed and taught in the program/subject specific classes to provide guidance to librarians who had not taught the class before. Further, these program/subject classes needed to become unique in content, building on the basics taught in the English sections and focusing on the resources and skills needed for the subject area of the course. Finally, although there had been efforts to steer away from a “show'em what we have” approach that detailed how to use the major databases, and online catalog, the librarians seemed set in their ways and bound to show off their wares! Inserting those wonderful information literacy concepts seemed an afterthought. The new lead instructional librarian was charged with finding new ways and convincing the other librarians to follow.

MAPPING THE ACRL STANDARDS

It was important in creating the new instructional program to have an initial overview which would connect abstract performance outcomes to concrete activities in the classes. Review of the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (Association of College and Research Libraries [ACRL], 2000) and *Objectives for Information Literacy Instruction: A Model Statement for Academic Librarians* (Association of College and Research Libraries [ACRL], 2001) provided the necessary background information for this task. The new lead instructional librarian created an overview chart which mapped the ACRL performance outcomes and objectives to library instruction class activities in general. The mapping gave a quick reminder of the generic areas that could be covered. The map was used to objectively evaluate the content of the current instructional classes and plan for their revision. It would also be used in the creation of the new program classes.

COURSE OUTLINES

Another tool created to increase and standardize inclusion of ACRL standards was the instructional course outline. Ivy Tech Community College utilizes a college-wide course outline system. All approved courses must be created in the statewide template. This form seemed to be the perfect template for the creation of library instruction classes. The form lists basic course information such as prerequisites, learning objectives, course content, class activities, and methods for evaluation. To this standard outline was added a category for listing library resources to be discussed, taught, or

demonstrated for that course. These sections tied nicely to some of the ACRL Standards criteria and terminology. A further benefit was that librarians and faculty would have a common language and form to use when developing and referencing an instructional class. The course outline would also serve as a tool to increase consistency in course design. It functioned as a lesson plan for multiple librarians who taught the same class. Alternatively, the standard format allowed for easy transfer of common elements to new classes. And finally, it could be handed to a new librarian who was assigned to teach the class for the first time, serving as a time-saving training tool.

A NEW APPROACH--SEVEN STEPS TO RESEARCH

In order to emphasize the research process, a new presentation titled "Seven Steps to Great Research" was created. This became the basis for all instructional classes, introducing concepts such as topic refinement and evaluation of resources.

The seven steps were defined as:

1. Identify & develop your topic.
2. Find background information.
3. Locate books using the catalog.
4. Locate articles using databases.
5. Find Internet resources.
6. Evaluate what you have found.
7. Revise your search as necessary.

A PowerPoint presentation was designed to support the basic presentation of each librarian, who was free to include his or her own touches and examples into the presentation. A handout reinforcing the points was created for distribution. This handout was included in a 56 page booklet, which all English students receive during their library instruction visit. The booklet also includes instruction on remote log on, research tips, and detailed instruction for use of each database available from the Ivy Tech Virtual Library web site. Within this Seven Steps framework, classes could be customized based on the learning objectives from the course outline. An example of this application to a Biology course is found in Appendix A. The combination of course outlines, the Seven Steps to Research foundation, and instructional handouts provided both consistency and flexibility in the instructional program.

SEQUENCING INSTRUCTION

The problem of repetitive content in the series of English courses remained. Many students at Ivy Tech take a basic sequence of classes that include IVY 070, ENG 025, ENG 111, and ENG 112. In order to create a unifying structure for the overall library program, a series of sequenced instructional classes was developed which allowed students to progressively learn new

skills. Learning objectives for each class reinforced and then built on the previous class's concepts. The instructional course outline format made it easy to see the progression of literacy concepts throughout the four classes. The learning objectives are detailed below. While some look to be repetitious, each iteration of the basics came with more sophistication in the teaching, allowing for a review of previously learned concepts to reinforce and grow the students' ability to apply them. Several full outlines are provided in Appendix B.

IVY 070: College Life & Success,

1. Identify areas within the physical library.
2. Understand library policies and procedures.
3. Access the Virtual Library use the Campus Connect System.
4. Identify areas within the Virtual Library to locate encyclopedias, books, articles.
5. Locate items using Ivy Cat and the Library of Congress Classification system.
6. List differences between library databases and general Internet resources.

ENG 032: Introduction to College Writing

1. Clearly define the research topic.
2. Identify keywords and synonyms.
3. List the successful steps to research.
4. Select appropriate types of resources based on information needs.
5. Create a basic search strategy using keywords, synonyms, and Boolean operators.
6. Distinguish full-text versus citation results for databases.
7. Evaluate the quality of the information retrieved.

ENG 111: English Composition

1. Clearly define the research topic, keywords, synonyms, and broader and narrower terms.
2. List the successful steps to research.
3. Create a complex search strategy using key words, boolean operators, truncation, wild cards, etc.
4. Define terms such as magazines, trade publications, scholarly publication, peer reviewed, and journal.
5. Locate above items using appropriate search methods.
6. Evaluate the quality of the information retrieved.

ENG 112: Exposition and Persuasion

1. Clearly define the research topic, keywords, synonyms, and broader and narrower terms.
2. List the successful steps to research.
3. Create a complex search strategy using key words, Boolean operators, truncation, wild cards, etc.
4. Utilize alternative methods for locating information, including WorldCat, bibliographies, and footnotes.
5. Be aware of ILL and ALI policies and use these methods when appropriate.
6. Explain the difference between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources.
7. Locate above items using appropriate resources and research methods.
8. Evaluate the quality of the information retrieved.

Librarians were still also looking for other ways to create a level starting point for students coming to the English library classes. Another step was taken towards this goal. The Ivy Tech statewide library system already had an online tutorial, *IvyTilt*, adapted from the *Texas Tilt* product by Sharon Griffith, librarian at the Ivy Tech Muncie campus. The English Department at the Central Indiana campus agreed to put another required library assignment into the common course syllabus. *IvyTilt* became a required “journal” assignment for ENG 025 students, to be completed before students came to the library for the instruction class. Because not every student takes the developmental ENG 025 class, *IvyTilt* was similarly required in the ENG 111 syllabus. The modules cover the basics of information literacy and use of *IvyCat*, the online catalog, and key online databases. Students were to submit the quiz results from each module to their professor for credit. The librarians hoped that this foundation would allow them to explore topics in more depth during the class sessions rather than cover just the basic introductory material. In reality, not all the students did the modules before they came to the library sessions; and so the librarians, like all good teachers, have still had to adapt their presentations to classes with different levels of student knowledge. Nevertheless, they believe that the sequencing concept is solid and provides us with the ability to grow our instructional presentations in these classes from mostly introductory lecture into more in depth interactive sessions. In addition to the *IvyTilt* assignment, the English Department agreed to increase the length of the library sessions from one hour to 90 minutes, allowing for more in depth coverage. Beyond that, we have found a trend towards second group library visits requested by many of the English professors. During these sessions, students work in the library

classroom. There is no planned presentation; however, a librarian is on hand to give one-on-one assistance, reinforcing concepts learned in the first session.

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

The librarians are pleased with the results of their initial efforts to “reinvent” their library instruction. The reduction of repetition, the consistency of delivery, and the ease of training that these efforts have wrought have improved the quality and depth of the instruction and have eased the burden of teaching the growing load of classes. The new focus on research steps and information literacy concepts has greatly enhanced the presentations. From this beginning, the next efforts will focus on three major areas. First, there will be continued work on developing a common starting point and basic foundation for the students in the sequence of English courses to further reduce repetition to the bare minimum needed. Second, more interactive teaching and active learning techniques will be explored to move the classroom presentations away from stand-up lectures and to better engage the students. And finally, a goal has been put into the campus strategic plan to create an across-the-curriculum information literacy program. This effort will focus on working with faculty to embed library instruction and information literacy goals into all programs at the college. This is a big challenge and a long-term goal, but it is the ultimate next step beyond the English instruction now solidly embedded in those foundation classes that almost every student must take. Included in this effort to give ownership of information literacy to the college as a whole, is a plan for initial and ongoing assessment. Demonstrating the value of library/information literacy skills will solidify their acceptance into the formal educational goals of the college in a way that has not yet been achieved.

While the Ivy Tech libraries’ instructional program is still in development, we feel that substantial steps have been taken. Creation of new tools such as the mapping chart for the ACRL standards and classroom activities, the instructional course outlines, and the research presentation are all positive steps along that path.

NOTE:

Ivy Tech-Central Indiana is one of fourteen regions of the Ivy Tech Community College system, which has 24 libraries serving its students statewide. All of the libraries offer library instruction, although not necessarily according to the plan described in this article.

RESOURCES MENTIONED IN ARTICLE

The Ivy Tech handouts are available individually at http://www.ivytech.edu/library/indianapolis/library_info/student-resources.html. IvyTILT is available at: <http://www.ivytech.edu/library/muncie/ivytilt/>.

REFERENCES

Association of College and Research Libraries. (2000). *Information literacy competency standards for higher education* [Brochure]. Retrieved January 28, 2005 from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/ilcomstan.html>

Association of College and Research Libraries. (2001). *Objectives for information literacy instruction: A model statement for academic librarians* [Brochure]. Retrieved January 28, 2005 from <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/objectivesinformation.htm>

“The Seven Steps of the Research Process”, Reference Department; Instruction, Research, and Information Services (IRIS); Cornell University Library, Ithaca, NY, USA. Retrieved August 16, 2006 from <http://www.library.cornell.edu/olinuris/ref/research/skill1.htm>. *This outline maybe adapted for non-commercial use.* Adapted with permission.

APPENDIX A

BIO 101 LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE TITLE: Introductory Biology

COURSE NUMBER: BIO 101

PREREQUISITES: Students have demonstrated competency in basic library, research, and computer skills through completion of ENG 025 library instruction or appropriate assessment.

DIVISION: Gen Ed

PROGRAM: Gen Ed

CLASSROOM HOURS: 1.5 hours

DESCRIPTION: Introduce the basic concepts of scientific literature

MAJOR COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be expected to:

1. Access the virtual library from off campus.
2. Identify databases which pertain to the research being performed.
3. Search *Access Science* for relevant entries using appropriate search strategies.
4. Differentiate between magazines and journals.
5. Identify the parts of a research article.
6. Evaluate print, electronic, and internet resources.

METHODS OF EVALUATION: Students will be evaluated based on involvement in class discussions and in-class activities, and quality of informative paper.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

1. Example Materials
 - a. Sample magazines: *Time*, *Discover*, *Newsweek*, *Scientific American*
 - b. Sample journals: *Nature*, *BioScience*, *Natural History*
2. Handouts
 - a. *Access Science Guide*
 - b. “What is a Journal?” Guide

APPENDIX B

Library Instruction Course Outlines for

IVY 070 LIBRARY INSTRUCTION COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE TITLE: College and Life Success

COURSE NUMBER: Ivy 070

PREREQUISITES: None

DIVISION: Gen Ed

PROGRAM: Academic Skills Advancement

CLASSROOM HOURS: 1 hour

DESCRIPTION: Basic introduction to the physical library, its policy and procedures, and the basic types of resources available. Review of the virtual library and the basic types of resources available online. Discussion of the difference between the library's electronic resources and general Internet resources.

MAJOR COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be expected to:

1. Identify areas within the physical library.
2. Understand library policies and procedures.
3. Access the Virtual Library use the Campus Connect System.
4. Identify areas within the virtual library to locate encyclopedias, books, articles.
5. Locate items using Ivy Cat and the Library of Congress Classification system.
6. List differences between library databases and general Internet resources.

COURSE CONTENT: Topical areas of study will include -

Critical and creative thinking

Technology utilization for research

METHODS OF EVALUATION: Students will be evaluated based on in-class activities and involvement in class discussion.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Example Materials

- a. Encyclopedia of Daily Life
- b. Culture Grams
- c. World Atlas

Handouts

- a. Basic Library Guide
- b. Cultural Resources handout

ENG 025 LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE TITLE: Introduction to College Writing II

COURSE NUMBER: ENG 025

PREREQUISITES: Students have demonstrated competency in basic computer skills through completion of ENG 024 or appropriate assessment.

DIVISION: Gen Ed

PROGRAM: Academic Skills Advancement

CLASSROOM HOURS: 1 hour

DESCRIPTION: Review of the virtual library and the basic types of resources available online. Introduction to the research process and search strategies.

MAJOR COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be expected to:

1. Clearly define the research topic.
2. Identify keywords and synonyms.
3. List the successful steps to research.
4. Select appropriate types of resources based on information needs.
5. Create a basic search strategy using keywords, synonyms, and Boolean operators.
6. Distinguish full-text versus citation results for databases.
7. Evaluate the quality of the information retrieved.

COURSE CONTENT: Topical areas of study will include –

Critical reading and thinking

Selection of topics

Search strategies

Research methods

Evaluation of resources

METHODS OF EVALUATION: Students will be evaluated based on in-class activities and involvement in class discussion.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Example Materials

- a. Statistical Abstract of the United States (HA202 .S2 2004 – 2005)
- b. Media Violence -Opposing Viewpoints (P96 .V5M428 2004)
- c. Violence in the Media – Current Controversies (P96 .V5V563 2001)

Handouts

- a. Basic Library Guide

ENG 112 LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE TITLE: Exposition and Persuasion

COURSE NUMBER: ENG 112

PREREQUISITES: Students have demonstrated competency in library research and computer skills through completion of ENG 111 library instruction or appropriate assessment.

DIVISION: Gen Ed

PROGRAM: Gen Ed

CLASSROOM HOURS: 1 hour

DESCRIPTION: Review of the research process, advanced search strategies, and identification of scholarly works.

MAJOR COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Upon successful completion of this course, the student will be expected to:

1. Clearly define the research topic, keywords, synonyms, and broader and narrower terms.
2. List the successful steps to research.
3. Create a complex search strategy using keywords, Boolean operators, truncation, wild cards, etc.
4. Utilize alternative methods for locating information, including WorldCat, bibliographies, and footnotes.
5. Be aware of ILL and ALI policies and use these methods when appropriate.
6. Explain the difference between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources.
7. Locate above items using appropriate resources and research methods.
8. Evaluate the quality of the information retrieved.

COURSE CONTENT: Topical areas of study will include -

Critical reading and thinking skills

Selection and development of topics

Search strategies

Research methods

Primary, secondary, and tertiary sources.

Evaluation of resources

METHODS OF EVALUATION: Students will be evaluated based on in-class activities and involvement in class discussion.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Example Materials

Handouts

- a. Library Resource Guide

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Jessica Placke (jplacke@ivytech.edu) received her MLS from Indiana University in 2003 and joined Ivy Tech-Central Indiana as the Lead Instructional Librarian in 2004. In addition to scheduling and teaching the library instruction classes at Ivy Tech and attending to the improvement of the library instruction model at the college, she also serves as a member of campus and college-wide distance education committees, where she is working to increase and improve library instruction opportunities for off-campus students.



“What I’ve been discussing thus far is a world Peter Drucker calls ‘the knowledge society,’ one in which information is, in fact, our most precious resource. In such a world, education should empower everyone, not the few. But for information to become knowledge, and ultimately, one hopes, wisdom, it must be organized. And, in this new climate, the public interest challenge, beyond access and equity is, I believe sorting and selection. The challenge of educators is to help students make sense of a world described by some as “information overload.”

Boyer, Ernest L. *Selected Speeches 1979-1995*. Princeton, NJ: The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1997, p. 140 —first published in *The New York Times* on December 13, 1994.