Providence College

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Invigorating Library Instruction

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Invigorating Academic Library Instruction

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Andria Tieman and Elliott Stevens

Some questions?

- Who here does academic library instruction?
- What are the conflicts that come with it?
- What are the rewards? Why do we love it?
- How is it changing?

Problems

- Not enough time for nuanced instruction
- Lack of student energy and engagement
- Lack of faculty involvement

A solution

Problem-Based Learning (PBL)

- Requires sequenced instruction
- Requires faculty input and collaboration
- Pushes students to think critically and share their progress with everyone in class

Some literature about PBL

Kenney, B. F. (2008). Revitalizing the one-shot instruction session using problem-based learning. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, *47*(4), 386-391.

“You are the senior advisor to Senator Brittany Aguilera from New York City. In one hour she needs to give a two-minute presentation on the Children’s Internet Protection Act (CIPA) to her constituents, but she doesn’t know if she’s in favor of it or against it. Your job is to find reliable, authoritative information from at least five different sources. The Senator is up for re-election and your job depends upon your getting accurate information fast” (Kenney, 2008, p. 388).

Hines, S., & Hines, E. H. (2012). Faculty and Librarian Collaboration on Problem-Based Learning. *Journal of Library Innovation*, *3*, 18.

The value of the “Ill-Structured Problem”: You do not have all the information, and there are many ways to solve the problem.

“You are members of the cabinet of Stefan Fule, the new Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighborhood Policy. He has forwarded you the European Council’s request to analyze Iceland’s preparedness for accession talks following the formal request by Iceland’s new government for membership. Commissioner Fule would like you to evaluate the situation and provide him with appropriate recommendations” (Hines, 2012, p.31).

My experience with a faculty member

The first meeting with the faculty member

- Discussed the assignment
- Went over the importance of PBL
- Planned two sessions of instruction
- Brainstormed about problems

First session with the class

- Began with questions: Why are we here? What is the assignment? What are we interested in?
- Used a problem I had cleared with the faculty member as my example
- Relied on a Verse-Chorus-Verse teaching method instead of lecturing

Takeaways

- Students knew the class was safe but charged. Nowhere to hide
- Students were provided with an example of a teacher-vetted problem
- Students used the resources actively and saw the librarian and their teacher working together

Second session

- Began with a review
- Broke class into four groups. Two groups got one problem and two groups got another
- Had students research their problems
- Had students present their findings

Takeaways

- Students were far more familiar with me
- Groups further investigated exemplary problems
- Groups appreciated how they found different things
- Lots of good repetition

Third session

There was no third session, but what could it have looked like? What’s the next step?

Problems with the solution?

- What are problems inherent in Problem-Based Learning?
- Concerns that you have?