

Pathfinder or Pedagogical? Transforming Course Guides for Student Success

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Question

Does the design and layout of a course research guide impact student learning?

Hypothesis

Information Literacy instruction teaches complex concepts. Students will learn more effectively through a pedagogical-style research guide, which guides students through the research process, than a traditional pathfinder-style guide (e.g., books, articles, reference materials).

Guide Design

Pedagogical

The Research Process

Research is an iterative process, meaning individual steps may be repeated multiple times. The graphic below shows one way that we can do research, but it doesn't look the same for everyone. The research process is non-linear and often messy. As you go through this guide, you should feel free to jump back and forth between steps as you see fit or to come up with a process that works better for you.

Think About Your Information Need Before Searching

Before diving right into a search, stop and take a moment to consider what type of resource you want to find. Do you need a book? A scholarly article? Do you need a blog written by or YouTube interview of an expert? Do you need raw data? Next, think about where that type of information might be found. Will a simple internet search locate what you need, or do you need another tool? Use the chart below to think about where you might find the information you need. If you're not sure where to start, this would be a great moment for you to contact me!

Methodology

Instruction

- Two sections of first-year seminar
- n=40
- Same professor
- Same librarian
- Same course content

Assessment

- Pre-Test
- Post-Test & Usability Questions
- 2 weeks after library session
- End-of-Semester Test
- Annotated Bibliographies
- Rubric

Pathfinder

Welcome

This guide is for students in the Dental Hygiene FYS, to help you find sources for your assignment.

Article Databases

- Google Scholar

Google Scholar provides a simple way to broadly search for scholarly literature. From one place, you can search across many disciplines and sources: peer-reviewed papers, theses, books, abstracts and articles, from academic publishers, professional societies, preprint repositories, universities and other scholarly organizations. Google Scholar helps you identify the most relevant research across the world of scholarly research.

- Academic Search Premier (EBSCO)

This multi-disciplinary database provides full text for nearly 4,500 journals, including full text for more than 3,600 peer-reviewed titles. PDF backfiles to 1975 or further are available for well over one hundred journals, and searchable cited references are provided for 1,000 titles. Academic Search Premier is updated on a daily basis. This database is partially paid for by INSPIRE.

Conclusion

Students who were taught and used the pedagogical-style course guide demonstrated **better learning and retention of concepts** than students using the pathfinder-style guide.

Results

