

**Kalamazoo College
Mellon Grant Progress Report**

**Integrating Research Instruction into the Curriculum:
A Model for English Departments**

Team Members

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Project Summary

I. Information Literacy in Seminars

A. Junior Seminar Spring 2003

1. Conduct focus groups of seniors who have taken the junior seminar.
Purpose of groups is to develop course goals
What do students need to know?
2. Survey senior English majors about seminar and information literacy.
3. Survey juniors at beginning and end of seminar to measure outcomes.
4. Information literacy sessions in the classroom at point of need,
Problem Based Learning!
5. Research Rescue for students at point of need
(individual appointment with Reference Librarian).
6. Presentation help: technical and media help, presenting help.

B. Sophomore Seminar 2003-2004

To be defined, based on outcome of junior seminar.

II. Web site development in the English Department

- A. Sophomore and Junior Seminar web sites to provide information on assignments and help with research.
- B. English Department web site overhaul, through Information Services, not part of this project.

Project Description

Our team has developed a project that will address two areas of need in the English department. One of these areas is web site development for the English department. Our English faculty member, Bruce Mills, would like to create web sites for the sophomore and junior seminars. These sites would provide students with information on their class assignments and help with research projects for those courses. The other component of our project addresses information literacy in the English sophomore and junior seminars. At this point in time, the sophomore seminar is still being developed as a course within the English department, so our group chose to work on the junior seminar first, with plans to implement our information literacy approaches in that seminar this spring, and the sophomore seminar second, to be implemented in the spring of 2004.

In order to create an approach to information literacy in the junior seminar, our group agreed that we needed to find out students' perceptions of what they need to know in order to find information. Our student members, Nania Lee and Michael Gouin, conducted two focus group meetings with senior English majors on October 7th. Bruce Mills floated between groups. We will continue to discuss the responses and impressions gathered at those two meetings during the fall. We will also prepare a more detailed questionnaire for senior English majors that we will distribute to them during second week of winter quarter. All of this information gathering will help us form an approach to teaching information literacy in the English seminars.

Our group concluded that students will be most receptive to learning information literacy skills when they are at a point of need in their coursework. We plan to have two information literacy sessions with a reference librarian in the junior seminar. These sessions will include demonstrations of online resources. Students will also be required to sign up for one Research Rescue appointment, in which they will get individual research help from a reference librarian. Our group has also discussed the growing need for polished presentation skills, especially using media technology. We will enlist the support of Kathryn Lightcap, our Information Technology specialist, to provide instruction in this area for seminar students.

Timeline for Project

Summer 2002:

Team members chosen, project conceived at the July 2002 retreat, working timeline established.

Fall 2002:

Team has met six times so far to discuss the project in general and specific ways of collecting feedback from students to use in planning the junior seminar in general, and in designing information literacy sessions and seminar websites. Focus groups conducted in October. Survey of senior English majors planned for winter quarter.

Winter 2002:

Conduct senior English majors survey during second week of winter quarter. After the survey, assess feedback from focus groups and survey to determine needs and directions for information literacy sessions in junior seminar and seminar website. Based on the feedback, plan the information literacy sessions and create junior seminar website.

Spring 2003:

Junior seminar website is up and included in seminar instruction. Conduct information literacy sessions in junior seminar. Survey the juniors at beginning and the end of the quarter to measure outcomes.

Summer 2003:

Based on the feedback and outcomes of the new approach to the junior seminar, begin planning for the sophomore seminar.

Fall 2003-Spring 2004:

Development and implementation of approach to the sophomore seminar.

Meetings thus far

July 29th & 30th, 2002: Retreat Meetings

Team members met at the Yarrow retreat to develop a project that would meet information literacy needs in the English department. We came up with a two-fold project that involves web site development and information literacy sessions for the junior and sophomore seminars in English.

September 9^h, 2002: Plan Focus Groups

Planned focus group meetings, discussed which students to include in groups and what questions to ask during meetings. The purpose of the focus groups is to collect feedback from English majors regarding the major in general, and specifically the junior seminar.

September 18th, 2002: Discussion of Focus Group Questions

Further discussion of focus groups, refinement of questions, and addressed the possibility of distributing a survey/questionnaire to seniors during fifth week, in addition to focus groups. Groups will meet during second week of fall quarter.

September 27th, 2002: Finalize Focus Group Plans

Brief meeting to finalize questions for focus groups and the email invitation to students. Invitation goes out on September 30th, groups to meet on October 7th. There will be two groups, one led by Michael, one led by Nania, and Bruce will float between the two. Also, further discussion of the survey/questionnaire.

October 7th, 2002: Focus Groups Meet

Nania and Michael lead the focus groups and take copious notes on their meetings.

October 16th, 2002: Discussion of Focus Groups Results

Focus groups provided many useful impressions from seniors. The team has decided that we need to survey the senior English majors to collect more specific feedback regarding information literacy.

November 19th, 2002: Senior English Major Survey

Discussion of senior survey and what kind of information to collect. Bruce will ask a faculty member in the Psychology department to look over our questions. We plan to distribute the survey during second week of winter quarter.

December 6th, 2002: Senior English Major Survey

Detailed discussion of survey question possibilities, beginning with questions suggested by Bruce. At the end of the meeting, we decide that everyone will create an ideal survey draft for our next meeting. We will look at all our ideal surveys and choose questions from them.

December 17th, 2002: Senior English Major Survey

Review of ideal survey drafts and decisions on which questions to put into the final survey. We also discussed details of question wording. We agreed to meet again during the first week of Winter quarter to prepare the survey for distribution during second week.

Friday January 10th, 2003: Final Survey Draft Discussion

Discussion of survey questions and hashing out of exact wording. Our student members tested out the survey to see how many minutes it took to complete. Bruce will present the survey to his department and explain our purpose. We are aiming for survey distribution early in third week.

Wednesday February 5th, 2003: Discussion of Survey Results

A striking piece of information gleaned from the survey is that students indicated a high level of confidence in their research skills. Bruce felt that students' overrated their abilities. Students also indicated that they do not see librarians as not providing useful help with research, and instead feel more comfortable getting help from instructors. Lots of discussion ensued on how to construct information literacy in the junior seminar in a way that the students will perceive as useful. Bruce suggested a collaborative and problem based approach. The group decided to encourage Research Rescue, but not to require it. We also discussed the need for outcomes assessment.

Wednesday March 5th, 2003: Discussion of approach to information literacy

In light of the results of the senior majors survey, the group discussed possible approaches for information literacy in the junior seminar. Bruce proposed having students meet in groups to discuss problems with research before meeting with the librarian, and to design the information literacy sessions based on the students' specified needs. Our group also decided that we don't have enough time this year to develop a web site from scratch for the junior seminar. We will revise an existing library-created research guide for the seminar, and work on web sites for both seminars next year.

Wednesday March 19th, 2003: Continued Discussion of IL in Junior Seminar.

Some discussion on assessment survey drafts and web course guide overhaul. Further discussion of implementing information literacy into the seminar and how timing will be important.

Friday April 18th, 2003: Bruce and Robin discuss Seminar Session

Work on an approach to the Information Literacy session in the Junior Seminar. We come up with four research problems that we anticipate from students, and decide to work on addressing those problems in the session. Also we discussed appropriate questions for the assessment survey that will relate to the four research problems covered in the session. Discussion of web course guide for seminar as well.

April 21th – April 29th, 2003: Development of Information Literacy Session

During this period of time, Bruce and Robin worked on honing the session.

Bibliography And Research Problems Assignment

Bruce required his students to turn in a working bibliography and discussion of problems they had encountered so far in their research. Students turned these in on Tuesday, April 25th. Robin made copies of these and went over them. The problems students encountered were revealing and helped Robin to focus on specific issues in the session.

Assessment Surveys

Robin worked on creating short assessment surveys to be administered before and after the information literacy session. Bruce felt the background questions asked on our senior majors survey would be useful information to collect from the juniors as well. The final pre-assessment survey was comprised of three sections: background questions, questions that asked students to provide “correct” answers regarding research problems, and questions that asked students to evaluate their levels of confidence in their research skills. Bruce gave the pre-assessment survey to his students on Thursday April 25th. The final post-assessment survey also included three sections: the same questions asking for “correct” answers, the same questions regarding self evaluation of confidence levels, and a new section asking for feedback on the usefulness of the information literacy session. The post-assessment survey was given to the students on Thursday, May 1st, two days after they went through the information literacy session.

Course Guide for English Junior Seminar

Robin reworked the old course guide made for the junior seminar in 2000, three years ago. The old course guide used a sequence that we usually follow in upper level information literacy sessions. First we cover finding books, then finding journal articles, and lastly, finding web sites. For the updated seminar course guide, we want the sequence to follow the problems we have identified:

- 1) “I don’t know where to look,”
- 2) “I cant find anything/ I found too much stuff,”
- 3) “How do I know that this stuff is any good?”
- 4) “How do I retrieve this stuff?”

Robin updated the course guide to reflect these problems. The new guide has four sections:

- 1) Where do I find things?
Links to Catalogs, Indexes, Databases, and Web Indexes and Directories.
- 2: Searching... How do I find things?
Links to Subject Headings, Boolean Logic, and advanced searching.
- 3) How do I know if these sources are any good?
Points of distinction between scholarly and popular periodicals, links to sites on how to evaluate web sites.
- 4) How do I retrieve this stuff?
Links to Catalogs again, links to full text databases, links to specific websites.

April 29th, 2003: Information Literacy Sessions in Junior Seminar

Two sections of the Junior Seminar

8:30am, 13 students

12:40pm, 14 students

October 7th, 2003: Meeting of Teams from Hope, Albion, and Kalamazoo

Stryker Center, Kalamazoo College

Presentations on both Chemistry and English projects. Hope College did not attend. The Albion and Kalamazoo teams presented on their projects and then discussed progress on the English projects, what is working, what has not worked.