

CCA Library Instruction : Recent History

A Recent History of Library Skills Instruction at CCA

(portions excerpted from previous reports)

Brief Timeline

Fall 2003 : two optional lectures; very low attendance

Fall 2004-Spring 2007 : TILT, online tutorial, recommended not required

Fall 2007-Spring 2008 : Library Skills for the Arts, online tutorial

Fall 2008-Spring 2010 : embedded instruction in English I and Intro to Modern Art

Fall 2010-Spring 2011 : embedded instruction in Foundations in Critical Studies

Fall 2011-Spring 2014 : librarians will provide instruction when requested by individual instructors

Detailed History

Fall 2003

During Spring 2003, Jane Martin, First Year chair, approached the library to request that first-year students be given library instruction as part of their comparative methods classes. To ensure that all new students would have an introduction to information literacy, in-class instruction was to be provided by the CCA librarians for all sections of a Core course, which was to be determined by Jane. In response to the request, the library designed a two-session program that could be offered during the fourth and sixth weeks of classes. This was submitted at the end of May.

In mid-August, Jane informed the library that information literacy instruction would be associated with the 3D Visual Dynamics classes. We prepared a schedule and syllabus for two 90-minute sessions that would be presented to each of the nine sections during the first and third weeks of October. Janice presented the course outline at the Core faculty retreat on August 23.

After the start of the Fall 2003 semester, Jane informed us that we would not be able to have class time to present the information literacy instruction. She proposed that the library offer presentations outside of class time, which instructors could require their students to attend. We arranged to present two sessions on two consecutive Fridays at the time Jane thought would fit best with the first-year student schedules. It was anticipated that about 80 students would be attending each session, because Jane would encourage all 3D Visual Dynamic instructors to send their students to the sessions. As it turned out, two out of seven instructors offered students an option to attend information literacy class in lieu of a missed class session, and one instructor gave a research assignment in conjunction with the sessions. No instructors required their students to attend the sessions. Fourteen students attended session one; four students attended session two.

Fall 2004-Spring 2007

Having learned that class time was not available for library skills instruction, the library installed and customized the Texas Information Literacy Tutorial (TILT), a modular, Web-based tool designed to teach undergraduates fundamental research skills. Arts related examples were substituted and the online tutorial was rebranded as The Information Literacy Tutorial. The tutorial included an online quiz, which could be printed out to ascertain participation. It launched in the summer of 2004.

TILT was promoted to Core and H&S faculty and had the strong support of K.C. Rosenberg, First Year chair. A survey conducted in Spring 2005 indicated that use of the online tutorial was minimal.

Along with library orientations and instruction provided on-request, TILT continued to be the primary means of library skills instruction until Cody Hennesy was hired as reference librarian.

Fall 2007-Spring 2008

Cody Hennesy and an intern created a new online tutorial specifically for CCA students called Library Skills for the Arts, which launched in summer 2007. As with TILT, faculty were encouraged make the tutorial a component of the curriculum. We have no data on use.

Fall 2008-Spring 2010

During the 2006/07 academic year, the CCA Library Planning Committee determined that mandatory in-class library instruction should take place in English 1 and Intro to the Modern Arts. Members of the committee were Juvenal Acosta, Melanie Corn, Fred Dolan, James Gogel, Eric Heiman, Mark Takiguchi, and Federico Windhausen.

Under the direction of Cody Hennesy, the library devised two sets of [learning objectives](#)—one for Eng 1, the other for IMA—and began to visit every section of both courses to present lectures of roughly 45 minutes. Librarians contacted Eng 1 and IMA instructors before each semester began to schedule a librarian visit to coincide with a related research assignment in each class. Typically these sessions occurred in the final month of the semester as students began final papers.

One ongoing challenge with the program was a disconnect between Eng 1 and IMA course curricula and the learning outcomes of the library skills program. The projects assigned in English 1 and Intro to Modern Arts varied widely according to individual instructors' tastes and needs, and many sections in both courses did not actually require research (or library use) of any kind in any of their assignments. The librarians' visits, and the content of their presentations, was often therefore viewed as peripheral to the course content by students (and often by instructors).

Librarians ran a series of pre- and post- library skills quizzes in Eng 1 and IMA sections throughout the program. The results demonstrated little to no improvement in student understanding of basic library skills when there was no follow-up research assignment in conjunction with the instruction. When given library research assignments that correlated with IMA learning objectives, however, students showed significant improvements on their before and after quiz scores.

In addition to the embedded instruction, the libraries continued to offer library instruction by request to all courses, as well as the Library Skills for the Arts online tutorial.

Fall 2010-Spring 2011

Based on the library skills assessments, librarians began discussions with the Director of Humanities and Sciences and the First Year Coordinator of Humanities and Sciences to find a better place in the first-year curriculum for presenting library and research skills. Foundations in Critical Studies was identified as the most promising course for several reasons:

- the course structure offers short weekly assignments (one of which could address library skills)
- the course was offered in two (or three) tracks that included large weekly lectures, enabling librarians to reach most first year students via two or three lectures per semester (compared to 15 to 20 lectures in the previous program)
- the course was already team-taught, enabling smoother collaboration with the libraries in terms of assignment creation

Cody Hennesy visited both sections of the Fall and Spring FiCS courses (Representations and Ethics) to deliver 15-minute lectures preparing students for their library assignments.

In addition to the embedded instruction, the libraries continued to offer library instruction by request to all courses, as well as the Library Skills for the Arts online tutorial.

Fall 2011

Feedback from FiCS instructors and from the Spring 2011 faculty survey suggested that librarian visits and research assignments did not fit well into the parameters of the FiCS curriculum. Since every other FiCS weekly assignment expressly forbids the use of secondary sources, it was confusing for the class to have one assignment focused on methods of finding and assessing secondary literature. In reviewing our experience over the last eight years, we have seen that academic-style research utilizing library tools and techniques has minimal relevance to the current first-year curriculum. Therefore the library has suspended its efforts to embed library skills instruction in a first-year course. When invited by an instructor, librarians will continue to make in-class presentations, and for independent learning, the Library Skills for the Arts online tutorial continues to be an option as well.

Spring 2012

For the purposes of accreditation, "research skills" as a learning outcome is being replaced by "information literacy" with its emphasis on critical thinking. It has been suggested that embedding formal library instruction in media history courses may be more effective than targeting freshmen.
Updated Fall 2013