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Buy low, sell high, get in now: Low-stakes/low-investment information literacy initiatives pay off big

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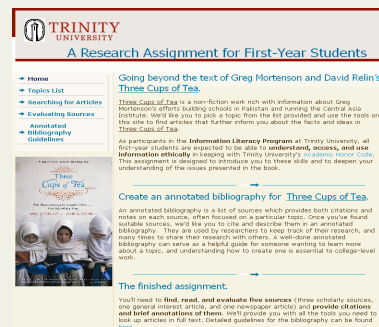
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Buy Low, Sell High, Get in Now: Low-Stakes/Low-Investment Information Literacy Initiatives Pay Off Big – Hoover, Donald, Wilson, Trinity University

Connecting a First-Year Summer Reading Assignment to a New Student Library Orientation

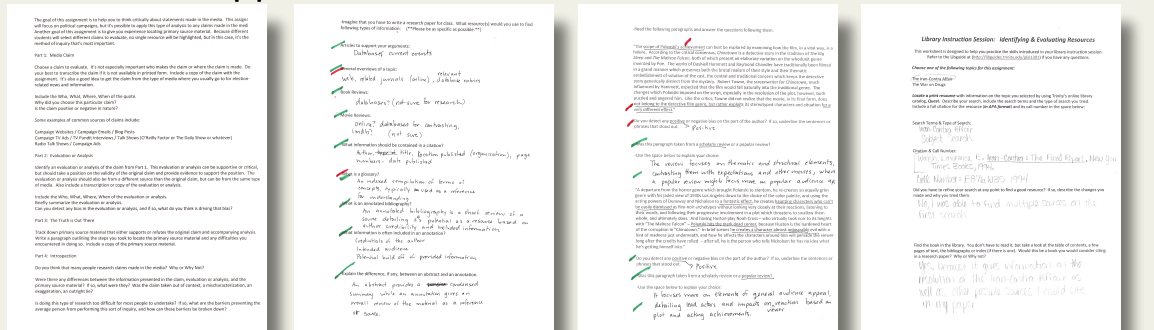


Faculty and Student Life leaders proposed an information literacy assignment to accompany Trinity's summer reading selection, *Three Cups of Tea*. The result was a substantial annotated bibliography to be completed over the summer by first-year students, and turned in to both student life staff and to First-Year Experience faculty.

The summer reading text was connected to the library orientation by emphasizing the themes of informed inquiry and social engagement, with a library information source at the center of each orientation task. Web 2.0 technology (online media & quizzes) was used to reach students before arriving on campus and after completing the orientation activities.

Library orientation outcomes included positive affect goals and an introduction to services, staff, and resources, with a special effort to engage the Resident Mentors as library role models and to utilize the social bonds formed by the Resident Mentor groups to model ideal information behaviors and attitudes.

The First-Year Summer Reading Assignment created heightened awareness of campus wide Information Literacy Objectives which led to opportunities for librarians in their liaison duties.



Evaluated by faculty for a small percentage of overall grade. Evaluated by librarian, but not for course credit. Evaluated by librarian, but not for course credit. Evaluated by librarian, counted as participation grade.

Librarians were able to use the success of the First-Year Summer Reading Assignment as leverage to propose new low-stakes/low-investment collaborations with faculty members during the Fall Semester. Three such collaborations with faculty members in the political science department resulted in librarian-created information literacy assignments that built upon skills introduced in the summer program. All of the assignments had a high completion rate.

Course	Information Literacy Goal	Objective	Student Action	Assessment
American Politics	Understand & Access	Efficiently identify and access information resources appropriate for political science research.		
	Access	Modify search strategies when needed.		
	Evaluate	Evaluate the appropriateness of a particular resource with regard to a specific project.		
	Use Effectively	Use relevant primary information resources.	Independently complete assignment outside of class.	Collected by teaching faculty. Counted as attendance grade. Evaluated by librarians to identify areas needing improvement.
Elections & Campaigns	Understand	Correctly identify primary and secondary sources.		
	Access & Evaluate	Identify, access, and evaluate information on the internet.		Collected and graded by teaching faculty. Counted for 15% of overall course grade.
Phil, Literature and Politics of the Three Cups	Understand	Recognize that information literacy is a lifelong skill and not limited to research projects.		
	None	Evaluate student information literacy skills.	Complete survey on first day of class.	Evaluated by librarians to identify areas needing improvement.

THE PAY OFF

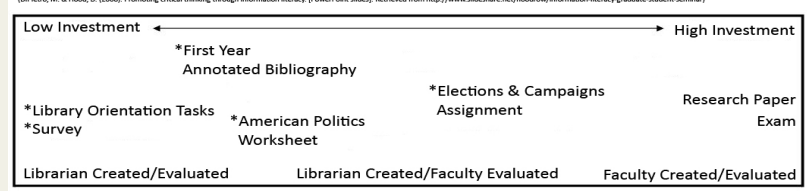
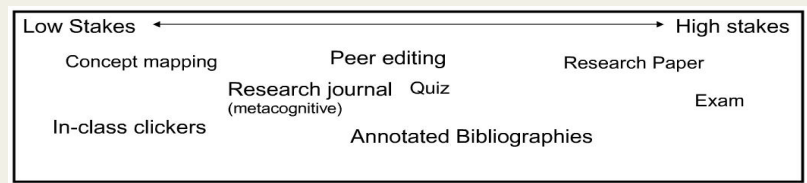
- ### Immediate Successes
- 400 summer annotated bibliographies completed
 - 95% completion rate for New Student Orientation tasks
 - Positive first impressions of library and research process
 - Visibility of project acts as conversation opener with faculty
 - New information literacy assignments in first-year courses
 - Relationship with campus entities and Orientation program expanded

- ### Long Term Opportunities
- Participation in *Summer Reading* assignment established
 - Tie-in with Trinity's IL program and first-year goals
 - IL in extracurricular context demonstrated
 - Low stakes, low risk can prime students for higher order IL
 - Low investment, high completion rate inspires new collaborations
 - New opportunity for higher stakes collaborations with faculty

Low Stakes Assignments

- Drawn from Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) literature. See Peter Elbow (1997).
- Informal
 - Low anxiety, less risk
 - Little or no effect on grade
 - Engaging, active learning situations
 - Prepare students for higher stakes (graded) projects

Elbow, P. (1997). High stakes and low stakes in assigning and responding to writing. *New Directions for Teaching and Learning*, 69, 5-13.



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