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Instructional Diversity: a Blended Model for Sustainable IL Programming

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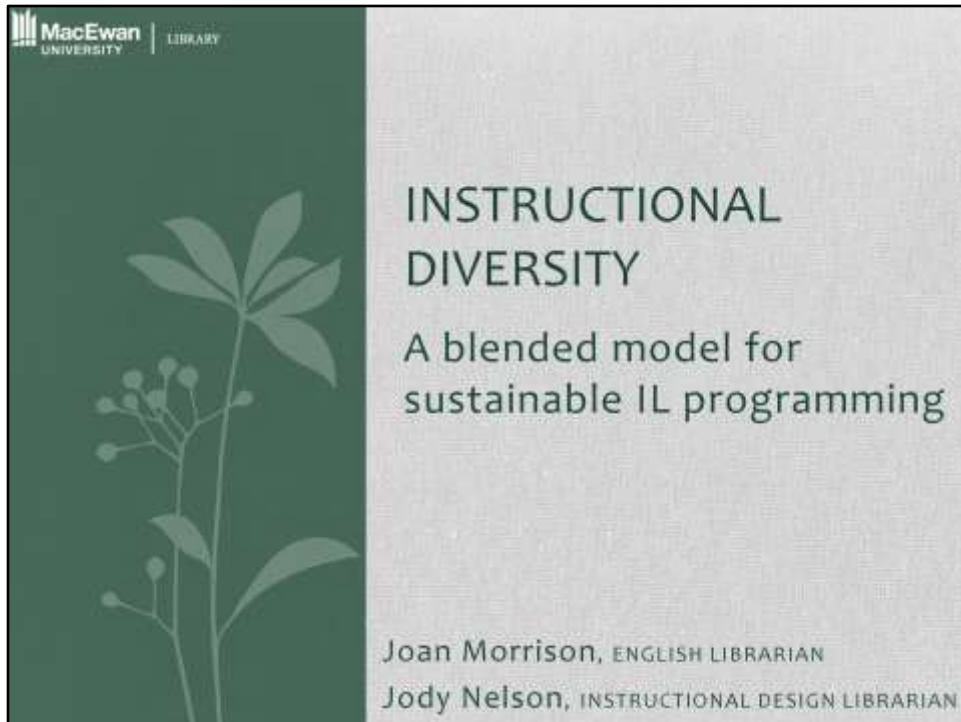
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[Slide 1 introduction “Instructional Diversity: A blended model for sustainable IL programming”]



[Slide 2 - image of MacEwan Library upper floor “MacEwan University Library”]

JODY MacEwan University is an urban, undergraduate university in Edmonton, Alberta, offering a wide variety of diplomas and baccalaureate degrees to over 11,000 students across three campuses. The City Centre Library is situated at the heart of our main campus in downtown Edmonton.

Our namesake, Dr. J.W. Grant MacEwan was Lieutenant Governor of the province of Alberta and a pioneer advocate for environmental sustainability.

MacEwan University’s downtown campus is built on a reclaimed railbed, and our library is on the third block of a five block long campus.

One of the key mandates of the MacEwan University Library is teaching information literacy and critical thinking skills to students. Library Instruction for first year English courses, is and has been at the core of our information literacy program.



[Slide 3 - image of bee in field of flowers “Information Literacy Instruction Program”]

JODY We teach approximately 160 English Library Instruction sessions each year, but have one English Subject Specialist – Joan.

JOAN Fall instruction is an incredibly busy time, and it would not be possible for me to personally teach the 90 fall term library instruction sessions alone. Prior to 2013 we relied on a complement of sessional librarians to share this teaching load.

In addition to receiving face-to-face instruction from the library, students in these 160 English classes also completed a mandatory, for credit, online IL tutorial through their course learning management system, which in our case is Blackboard. Note: Much of the content included in the face-to-face sessions was duplicated in the online tutorial.

In early 2013, our Library instruction team was challenged to create a more sustainable model for our Information Literacy programming.

Our instruction team began looking in the library literature and at other institutions for successful models for sustainable information literacy instruction, with the following knowledge in hand:

1. We needed a sustainable model that could be managed by one Librarian.

2. We had not yet mastered cloning.
3. Our sustainable model would rely on online tutorials.
4. We did not want to lose the personal relationship Joan has with English faculty and students
5. Based on the results of a large scale assessment project of our IL English program we knew that students were struggling, not with finding sources, but with evaluating the information they were finding. This is where they needed us the most.
6. We had a new Learning Commons librarian whose vision was for student self-directed learning, and who was keen to be involved in offering drop-in workshops & programming to support IL instruction.

Our Goal: to create a sustainable IL instruction model that could be managed by our instruction team, reduce duplication of content and effort, incorporate both online and in-person instruction and promote self-directed learning opportunities through a new Learning Commons.



[Slide 4 image of romanesque cauliflower “Hybrid: ‘4 points of contact blended model’”]

JODY After looking at a few different models for blended instruction in academic libraries, we developed a multi-pronged or hybrid model for sustainable IL instruction, whatever you wish to call it, we affectionately refer to our new model as the “4 points of contact blended model” and it is a mix of online, face-to-face, required, drop-in, in-class & library time...

In our new 4 points model, students have the opportunity to:

1. Meet Joan early in the semester.
2. Complete an online IL tutorial.
3. work together on a hands-on in-class learning activity facilitated by Joan.
4. Attend drop-in workshops in the Library’s Learning Commons.

Joan will now describe the new model and implementation at MacEwan University.



[Slide 5 image of snowdrops “Early Adopters: Fall 2013 pilot”]

JOAN In Fall 2013 we began rolling it out this new “4 Point of Contact Blended Model” with the English Department, with a goal of 25% uptake. I began with an ‘early adopter’ model described in the work of Jennifer Kelly’s in “Off the shelf and out of the box.” This model asks faculty to volunteer to try out the new model and offer feedback. In late summer as I started getting requests for fall instruction I met with my English faculty one-on-one, described the model explained the benefits and asked if they were willing to try it. This bit was labour intensive, but it is only done once as they are working on their course syllabi and place each of the 4 points of contact at the appropriate date in the course.

The Instructors are especially excited about seeing how students get multiple points of contact reinforcing key skills and how we are building a MacEwan culture of self-directed learning through the Learning Commons and tutorials.

In the first term I had a goal of 25% implementation but got 42% buy in. Indulge me as I use a gardening metaphor to to describe our model and its implementation:



[Slide 6 image of plowed field “Preparing the ground (1ST Point of Contact)”]

JOAN You need fertile soil to grow anything. We have all met students who don't know about the library or its value, even very late in their first term. In our first point of contact we wanted to give the students an early introduction to who their Librarian is, and with the multiple points of contact through the model they will recognize their Librarian as they begin the next step, the tutorial. The goal was to meet students early in the semester and do a 5-minute classroom visit to introduce students to library services and upcoming IL learning expectations & opportunities.



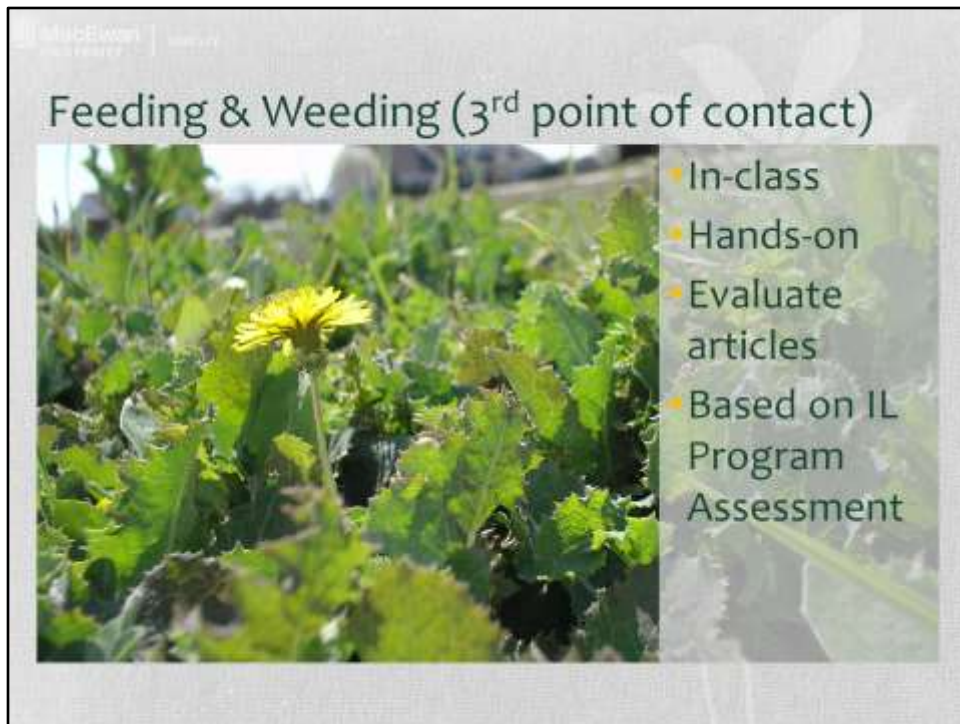
[Slide 7- image of seedlings “Planting the seeds (2nd Point of Contact)”]

JOAN Our second point of contact is an online, modularized, interactive IL tutorial. This tutorial is completed by first-year students for 3-5% credit in their final grade in their English courses. And it is as they work through the tutorial modules that the seeds of IL concepts and skills are planted. The tutorial, which we still call SearchPath, is built using Adobe Captivate, and roughly modeled on the old Western Michigan State University's SearchPath. It is composed of 5 modules, with 2-5 interactive learning objects. Students self enroll in the tutorial through our University's Learning Management System the can generate a certificate of completion of they watch all the tutorial and have a grade of over 80%. Jody our instructional design librarian will talk about best practices & give you a sneak peak...

JODY Following best practices each of these learning objects is short, includes interactive elements such as clicking, typing & quizzing components, and is linked to a specific learning outcome in the old ACRL framework - standard for IL in higher education. Being as it is an online tutorial - we are able to meet the IL needs of both onsite and online students. Because one of the goals of our 4 point model was to maintain and cultivate relationships between students & the library - & their librarian for English - we have also personalized the tutorial in part through including a an 30second welcome video featuring Joan!

Note that the individual videos from this modularized tutorial are also embedded in key locations on our library website for point-of-need learning and instruction, and are also creative commons licensed, and openly available for taking, using and adapting.

The tutorials without the associated quizzes can be seen at http://library.macewan.ca/video_tutorials/searchpath

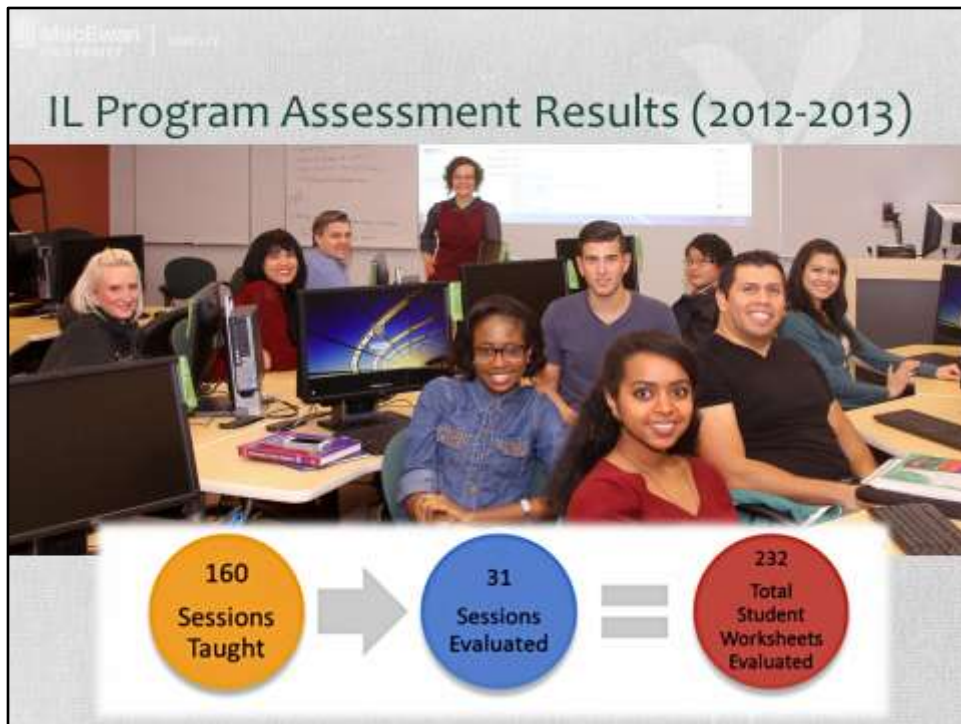


[Slide 8 image of dandelion “Feeding & weeding (3rd Point of Contact)”]

JOAN Here the students learn how to weed out bad information sources. But students need to be able to recognize the weeds. In this class visit I engage students with a no-tech, hands-on learning activity, designed to develop essential critical-thinking and source evaluation skills. I visit their class with a set of folders with printouts of information from ebooks, articles and the open internet all on a particular hot topic. Students work in small groups to determine which source would be appropriate to use in a university level research paper and justify their decisions. This activity was designed based on the results of our wide scale English Assessment research project.

A bit of background:

During the 2012-2013 academic year we undertook an evaluation of student learning in first year English library sessions. Note that these were traditional 60-90 minute library sessions in which instructors brought their students to the library’s instruction lab. Our Chair, Jessica Knoch who led the assessment team had attended ACRL Assessment Immersion lead by Megan Oakleaf. We employed an authentic assessment tool in the form of a student worksheet completed during the library session. Where student permission was received, we anonymized the worksheets and then scored them independently using a rubric to evaluate our two learning outcomes, which Jody will now explain:

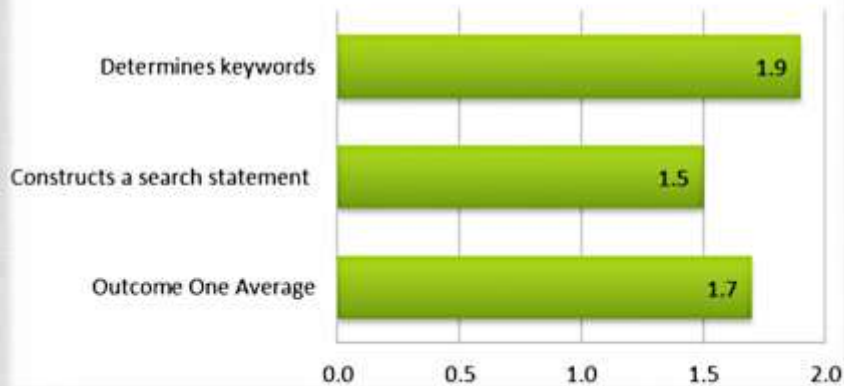


[Slide 9 image Jody with class “IL Program Assessment Results (2012-13)”]

JODY We were fortunate in this assessment project in that we actually had a fairly large data set to work with. Over the course of the year we evaluated 31 of our 160 library instruction sessions. We collecting 232 usable student work sheets that we could then assess. Our rubric was developed on models produced via Project Rains, and was standardized by the group. Our rubric scored student worksheets on two outcomes: the first pertaining to the construction of a keyword search strategy, and the second learning outcome pertained to selecting and evaluating articles retrieved in their database search.

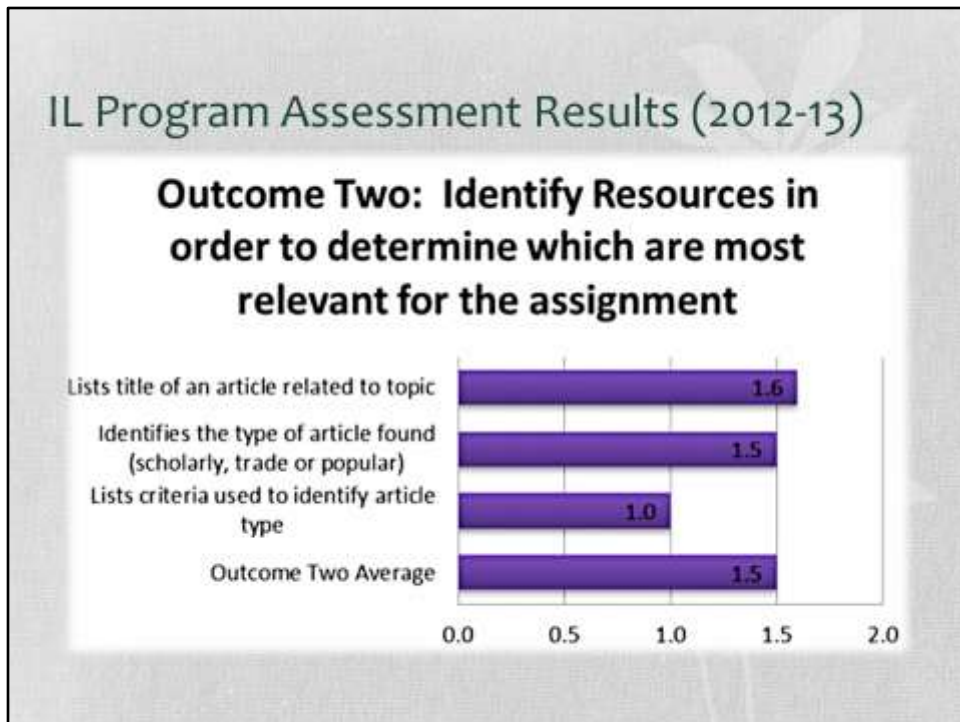
IL Program Assessment Results (2012-13)

Outcome One: Construct an effective search strategy in order to locate relevant resources



[Slide 10 Graph “IL Program Assessment Results (2012-13) Outcome one: Construct an effective search strategy in order to locate relevant resources”]

JODY Outcome 1 involved constructing an effective search strategy to locate relevant results; we were happy with the results on outcome 1.



[Slide 11 Graph “IL Program Assessment Results (2012-13) Outcome two: Identify resources in order to determine which are most relevant for assignment”]

JODY Outcome 2 pertained to evaluating resources found – students were asked to select a relevant article, identify the type of article, and list criteria used to determine type.


We observed low scores for identifying type of article and listing criteria used to identify article type.

We were particularly disappointed with this low score, because the critical thinking skills necessary for article evaluation were not being broadly demonstrated.

It was this particular low score – the lowest on our rubric – that informed our decision regarding our third point of contact learning activity. We asked ourselves: if we have one opportunity guaranteed to meet with these students for face-to-face instruction what do they most need to learn? And the answer was clear: evaluating the results they were finding, to determine quality, purpose and relevance.

MacEwan University

U-pick Harvest (4th point of contact)

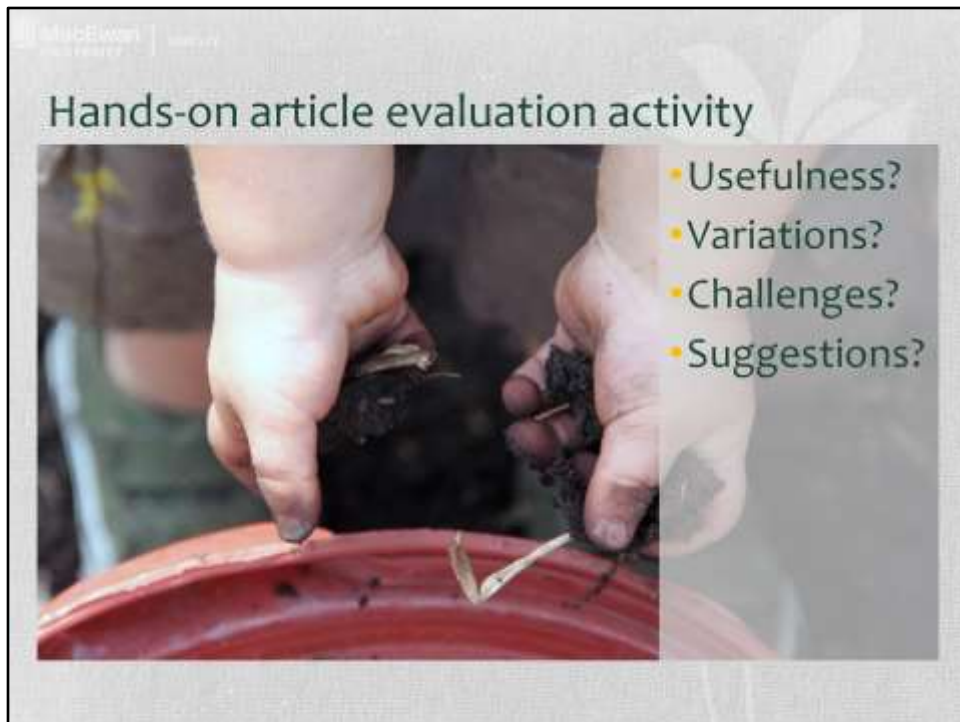


- Drop-in
- Guarantee
- 40 sessions
- 244 students attended!
- (+2 online)

[Slide 12 image of tomato “U-pick harvest (4th Point of Contact)]]

JOAN Our final Point of contact had a reasonably bountiful harvest! 244 students attended our drop in Research Essentials Workshops in the Learning Commons.

We offered approximately 40 drop-in hands-on workshops throughout the year in the library computer lab. These sessions fit with our Library’s Learning Commons vision for student-directed learning. Our guarantee: We promise, come with your research questions, leave with your virtual hands full of virtual sources. In addition to the 244 students who attended in person, we had 2 students attend our drop-in online workshop that we offered for the first-time in the Spring semester this past June.



[Slide 13 image of child's hands "Hands-on article evaluation activity"]

JOAN Time for you to get your hands dirty. Jody will be handing out the materials we use in our evaluating sources activity... and some farmer's market carrots. The folders we brought today are on different topics. When we use this activity in our third point with a class of students, students are divided into small groups; each group is given exactly the same folder – so we would normally only be looking at one topic - they are given 8 minutes to look over the contents of the folder using the essay question to help them determine what they think is the best source, & then justify their choices to the class as a whole. Normally the whole activity takes about 30 minutes.

In your rows, we'd like you to have a look at the example folders and discuss the activity / contents using the questions on the screen as a guide. How might you see your self using or adapting this? What do you see as some challenges? Do you have any suggestions for us? These are topics and folders that we no longer need – so in the interest of re-using & re-cycling we encourage you to take a folder with you [note: we only have 17 folders – if we run out – email and we'll send you the electronic files]. No need to return the carrots, either. We'll give you 5 minutes and then discuss as a group.



[Slide 14 image of farmers market “Weighing in: Observations & feedback”]

JODY And how do our four points stack up against traditional library instruction?

It is still very early days, as our new model was being piloted for the first time. Our most robust evaluation of any one aspect of the model took place at our ‘3rd Point of Contact,’ the hands on article evaluation activity. We opted to evaluate students using the ILAAP questionnaire, a provincially developed information literacy assessment tool with questions tied directly to the old ACRL standards.

For the other three points we relied on some observed correlations and solicited and unsolicited feedback from students and faculty as well as librarians involved in the model, to help us evaluate the effectiveness.

Joan is going to share with you what worked well..

What worked...

- Faculty embraced model of self-directed learning.
- Less prep time!
- Students meet Librarian earlier.
- Perceived impact of tutorial on assignments.
- Excellent feedback on evaluation activity.
- Students loved the workshops!
- From online students:
 “very concise & helpful”
 “specifically what I was looking for”



[Slide 15 text “What worked”]

JOAN Faculty embraced model of self-directed learning. Five years ago our university moved from a community college to a university, and faculty see this self-directed model as more appropriate for university undergraduate level education.

Less prep time for Librarians! In fact – our 3rd & 4th points require no prep for librarians to teach, and we were able to draw upon a pool of 11 librarians to step in & help out when needed!

English instructors loved that students meet the Librarian earlier in the semester. Students learn that there are subject specialist librarians, that there is a place to go for help. As we were looking for instructors to be early adopters of this new model, this 1st point of contact was a big selling feature, right away they saw the benefit of giving Students multiple contact opportunities with the library / librarian. We overheard that our goal of personalizing the online tutorial worked! When students whispered: “hey, that’s Joan... from SearchPath!”

We had excellent feedback on article-evaluation activity from English faculty AND librarians, we also have the ILAAP data that Jody mentioned. ILAAP Questionnaires were completed by 740 students in MacEwan first year English. Of the students who completed the questionnaire 80% of students could correctly select the best

keywords for a specified topic – which reinforced to us the value of the online tutorial - and 88% demonstrated an ability to correctly recognize the qualities of a scholarly article – which is good, because that the activity they completed moments before, clicked for them!

Although it was not studied in any formal or systematic way, there was a perceived correlation between students work on the tutorial and students grades on their resulting research essay. We noticed that if a student did well on the tutorial, they did well on their essay grade. If the student hopped in and out of the tutorial and skipped the quizzes they also did poorly on their essay.

Students loved the drop-in workshops! As mentioned we had 244 students attend, and in the 15 workshops I taught I asked students for feedback and heard that they students did leave with their virtual hands full of virtual resources.

We did get written feedback online for our 3 workshops offered for the first time this spring. Students said:

“very concise & helpful”

“gave me specifically what I was looking for”

What didn't work...

- Some students did not complete tutorial.
- Challenges around scheduling, marketing, communicating drop-in workshops.
- Many students did not attend drop-in workshops.
- Missed some students...

who may have really needed help.



[Slide 16 text “What didn't work”]

JODY Some students did not complete tutorial

We experienced challenges around scheduling, marketing, communicating drop-in workshops.

Many students did not / were not able to attend drop-in research sessions and we know we missed some students who may have really needed help.



[Slide 17 image of ladder “Pruning & Transplanting”]

JOAN We will have full implementation of this 4-point model for English 111 and 102 in fall 2014. We have learned from our experiences of the past year, and have made changes.

Marketing, communicating & getting students to attend drop-in workshops has possibly been our biggest challenge. Our response:

We knew that some sessions were poorly attended, but now I have 3 academic terms worth of statistics to look at and hope to have a fall schedule for workshops that better meets student need. In previous terms we started workshops in late September, but we did not get significant student attendance until mid October. We are also offering evening drop-in sessions, and, after a successful pilot this spring, we will also be offering drop-in workshops *online* for our online students and those who can't make it in during the day.

We have a newly re-designed proof of attendance 'bookmark' for in-person / online workshops.

We are working with University marketing and the graphic designer on creating new posters and handouts.

JODY We are also transplanting this model to be applied to other disciplines. Piloting modified blended models for 100 level Nursing, Psychology, History & Classics students. In History & Classics our subject specialist will not be using the hands-on article evaluation activity - nor will she be offering that follow-up class visit. Instead at the appropriate point in the semester she will be embedded in the online course on the university learning management system offering research support. Looking further ahead we will be piloting a blended model for our Business students in Fall 2015.

MacEwan University

Discussion: Blended IL instruction models



- Thoughts?
- Variations?
- Challenges?
- Suggestions?

[Slide 18 image of boot with succulents “Discussion: Blended IL instruction models”]

NOW IT’S OUR TURN TO LEARN FROM YOU!

Brainstorm: peer-to-peer sharing: have an opportunity to learn from each other, through a peer-to-peer sharing activity that will generate ideas for adapting, scaling, and modifying blended learning models for sustainable IL programming. parts you might want to incorporate; changes; challenges; suggestions for improvement; what are you doing differently?

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[Slide 21 - image of MacEwan Library upper floor “Questions”]

Please contact us if you have any further questions.

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