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From Prep to Delivery: Peer Instruction for First-Year Business Students

Teresa Williams
twilliam@butler.edu

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From Prep to Delivery:

Peer Instruction for First-Year Business Students

Teresa Williams, Business Librarian, Butler University Libraries, twilliam@butler.edu

NUTRITION INFORMATION

This recipe highlights the value of peer instruction for students in a First-Year Business Experience (FBE) course. Follow these steps to prepare upper-level business majors to serve as Peer Instructors who will co-teach with the Librarian to share a “tried and true” recipe for research success in an important first-year course.

NUMBERS SERVED

Serves up to 25 first-year business students

COOKING TIME

Allow up to 2 hours for prep and 1 hour for classroom delivery

DIETARY GUIDELINES

This recipe has a positive impact on student learning in two ways. First, it provides an opportunity for upper-level business majors to share their knowledge and gain teaching experience through targeted peer instruction. It also introduces first-year students to an investigative method for finding and evaluating business information, with an emphasis on documenting the research path for further exploration and citation of sources.

ACRL FRAMEWORK ADDRESSED

Searching as Strategic Exploration

MAIN INGREDIENTS

- Upper-level business major who successfully completed the FBE course
- Classroom or lab
- Instructor’s station with document camera
- Computer access for students
- Selected tutorials on business information resources
- Course LibGuide
- Reliable resources for business information
- Search Log with columns for “Information Needed,” “Resource Consulted,” “Search Terms Used,” and “What You Found.”

MAIN COOKING TECHNIQUE

Librarian and Peer Instructor combine discussion/demo with hands-on research and team consultations

PREPARATION

Recruit an upper-level business major who completed the FBE course. Note: Prep time is shorter with students who work in the Library’s Information Commons program, but the Librarian may substitute other qualified

business majors. In collaboration with FBE faculty, post tutorials on business information resources to the course management system for FBE students to review prior to the in-class instruction session. The Peer Instructor will review the same tutorials and practice completing a Search Log to record the results of sample searches for business information.

COOKING METHOD

1. Introductions and testimonial: 5 minutes

- a. The Librarian introduces the Peer Instructor who will identify his/her major, year in the degree program, and the professor who taught his/her FBE course.
- b. The Peer Instructor then talks about his/her personal experience in the course, including the value of the instruction session, and reveals how his/her first-year team fared in the course business plan competition. The Peer Instructor also highlights how the session contributes to better research outcomes in upper-level business courses.

2. Show-and-tell: 20 minutes

- a. The Peer Instructor distributes blank Search Logs to the students.

- b. The Librarian discusses course project and research strategies as the Peer Instructor documents the process on a Search Log. Students may add notes to their own Search Logs to help them recall the process.
- c. After two or three resources are reviewed, the Peer Instructor uses the document camera to show students the research path as tracked on the Search Log. He/she points out how one source may lead to discovery of another or why some entries may be crossed off the Search Log as the research progresses.
- d. The steps are repeated until a variety of reliable business information sources are introduced, discussed, and documented.

3. Hands-on research and team consultation: 35 minutes

- a. Following show-and-tell, students work in teams to identify information needs for their business plan. Team members use the course LibGuide to explore resources demonstrated in the session and record their efforts on their Search Logs.
- b. As students conduct research, the Librarian and Peer Instructor meet briefly with each team to answer questions and provide encouragement.

4. Follow-up: Until done (time varies)

- a. Scan the sample Search Log com-

pleted by the Peer Instructor during the session and save it to the course LibGuide for later reference.

- b. The Peer Instructor may volunteer to assist the Librarian with open lab sessions held for the FBE students the week before assignment is due.

ALLERGY WARNINGS

Make sure the Peer Instructor not only knows the material but is also comfortable speaking in front of a class. Carefully monitor time devoted to show-and-tell to allow for quality team consultations. (Assigning tutorials prior to the session helps with time constraints). Remind students that research is an exploratory process, and their completed Search Logs will vary in terms of paths taken and sources recorded.

CHEF'S NOTE

The "testimonial" from the Peer Instructor is an important element of this recipe. The first-year students sit up and pay attention when they realize they are getting advice from a fellow student who can relate to their situation and has achieved success in the same course. The peer instruction has also been well-received by the FBE faculty.

The Business Librarian and Information Commons Librarian at Butler University collaborated to integrate the Peer Instructor component into the FBE course. Many of the Information Commons students involved say the opportunity helped them learn more about business information re-

sources and gave them a greater appreciation of the effort involved in preparing and providing information literacy instruction.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- "Trade Sources"—One of the tutorials reviewed by first-year business students prior to in-class instruction session. http://www.guideside.palni.org/guide_on_the_side/tutorial/tradepubs.
- Blank Search Log.
- Search Log completed by the Peer Instructor during instruction session
- Three photos of Peer Instructor demonstrating a Search Log used to track the research process.