

CJ 110 - Introduction to Criminal Justice

Harry R. Dammer, Ph.D.
Department of Sociology/Criminal Justice

Project Description

The proposed project was designed to develop information literacy skills for all students taking criminal justice as a major at the University of Scranton. In separate sections of *Introduction to Criminal Justice* (CJ110) students were given a *mandatory* self-administered tutorial lasting 20-30 minutes. The progressive tutorial was in five sections, each with an explanation of concepts, a series of questions, and examples for further study. The main sections were as follows:

- How to define your need (topic exploration)?
- Different types of sources available for information?
- How to conduct a search?
- How to find, evaluation and cite internet information?
- Complete a follow up project using the acquired skills.

The sections in the tutorial were developed to promote the specific information literacy skills such as determining information needed, finding information, then assessing the quality of that information. These skills are currently written as the objectives of the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* written by the ACRL (2000). The final tutorial presented to the students was adapted with permission from and credit given to Western Michigan University and their Dept. of Criminal Justice. And it was designed for continuous student access, and as a supplement to information literacy instruction. To view tutorial see: <http://academic.scranton.edu/department/wml/cj/menu.html>

Implementation

On September 6, 2005 Librarian Clara Hudson visited the two *Introduction to Criminal Justice* classes of Dr. James Roberts. To inform students of the CJ resources available she explained the updated *Criminal Justice Pathfinder* on the library website http://academic.scranton.edu/department/wml/crim_justice.html and then explained the tutorial described above. The follow-up exercise was given as an assignment to be handed in to Dr. Roberts.

Assessment

Each student was instructed to complete the progressive tutorial. Then each student was asked to complete the brief follow-up project to assess the understanding of the skills acquired. The follow-up exercise was graded for assessment purposes but the students were not held responsible for the grade. The following is a summary of the results of the questions in the follow-up exercise.

Follow-Up Exercise Results

	Class 1		Class 2	
Question #	Correct Answers	Unanswered	Correct Answers	Unanswered
1. (1)	22		29	
2. (1)	22		25	
3. (1)	24		29	
4. (2)	26		29	
5. (2)	25	1	29	
6. (2)	23	3	24	1
7. (2)	23	3	27	1
8. (2)	22	4	29	
9. (3) & (4)	22	4	23	2
10. (4)	16	6	17	8
Total returned	26		29	

The numbers listed in the parentheses in the left column correspond with the following standards of the ACRL (2000). The results indicate that in almost all cases the students are able to accurately answer questions related to the standard being tested for.

Standard (1) The information literate student determines the nature and extent of information needed.

Standard (2) The information literate student can access needed information effectively and efficiently.

Standard (3) The information literate student evaluated information and its sources critically and incorporated selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

Standard (4) The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

Future Implementation

In addition to instruction to students in the context of an introductory course, Librarian Clara Hudson attended the September meeting of the Sociology/Criminal Justice Department to demonstrate the tutorial and web resource guides for both Sociology and Criminal Justice as information literacy guides for use by department faculty with students. It was proposed by the Chair (H. Dammer) that the tutorial become Department policy and that all students in the *Introduction to Criminal Justice* (CJ 110) be required to take the tutorial. However, there was lack of agreement in the Dept. as to whether the tutorial should not be required in the *Introduction to Criminal Justice* (CJ 110). It was determined and voted on that as of 2/06 the tutorial would be given in the class titled *Criminology* (S/CJ 213). The class is also required for

all of the 165 majors and 20 plus minors. The Dept. voted that the tutorial would be given in all *Criminology* classes after of 1/06. Also, Dr. Loreen Wolfer has agreed to apply for the same Information Literacy Grant program and to formulate a tutorial for Sociology students in '05-'06.