

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION AS A PART OF DISTANCE LEARNING

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Library instruction for Prince George's Community College students enrolled in online courses or face-to-face courses at the Extension Centers is now available via Blackboard. This has been developed so that Distance Learning and Extension Center students have the opportunity for instruction in library research methods. Distance Learning students and students in traditional classes alike have equivalent needs to locate information with efficient research tools and methods.

Professor Diane Finley (Psychology) initiated a proposal for the fall 2003 semester to set up a Library Instruction forum in the Discussion Board section of Blackboard for her PSY 204 Adolescent Psychology online class. She also listed my name as a teaching assistant for the course, which gave me access to that course. Dr. Finley described to me the nature of the research assignment that the students in the class would need to complete. I developed a library instruction lesson customized to that class's research assignment and posted it to the Blackboard Discussion Board.

Dr. Finley scheduled the period of September 14-23 for the students to post questions to that Discussion Board. I checked the Discussion Board at least once per day and answered the students' questions. Dr. Finley required Discussion Board participation of all students in this fall class. As a result of having had access to the library instruction, Dr. Finley reported that, at a minimum, the students in this section were using refereed articles. According to Dr. Finley, the students in this section turned in research and writing assignments that were generally an improvement over those that were submitted in sections without the library instruction.

Building on this pilot project, during the spring 2004 semester, Dr. Finley and I have collaborated to present library instruction to students in six online psychology classes. Based on the initial fall experience of what were frequently-asked-questions on the Discussion Board, I incorporated additional instruction into the initial posting. In some of the six spring classes,

Dr. Finley required Discussion Board participation on this forum; in other classes, it was optional. In classes where participation was required, a greater number of questions were posted to the Discussion Board, with more points being raised. Dr. Finley then assigned research that used the instruction initially posted on the Discussion Board.

This method of delivering library instruction via Blackboard will also be used during the spring 2004 semester in Professor Robert Goldberg's English 102 class. This class is taught face-to-face at Metro Center, and uses Blackboard as a learning tool. Again, I have posted library instruction that has been developed to meet the research needs of this particular class. Librarian Marianne Rough will participate in this section's question and answer period on the Blackboard Discussion Board, during the period of April 19-24.

Instructors of online courses or courses taught at the Extension Centers who would like to arrange library instruction using Blackboard for summer 2004 or fall 2004 courses are asked to contact Norma Schmidt at extension 0471 or email nachmidt@pgcc.edu.