

## Tips for Engaging Students

### **Talk with the professor before the class.**

- ✓ Ask for a copy of the assignment.
- ✓ Find out what the instructor expects students to learn from the session.
- ✓ Request a list of topics before the class. Use similar topics in your search examples.
- ✓ Offer to work with the professor to develop an assignment involving using the library.
- ✓ For classes working on research papers, offer to do a consulting session later in the semester.
- ✓ Encourage the professor to bring the class at the appropriate time during the semester – don't schedule the class too early or too late in the semester.
- ✓ Ask the professor to be present and participate in the session.

### **Focus on a few key points.**

- ✓ Choose the most important things for students to know before they leave.
- ✓ Don't overwhelm them with information.
- ✓ Focus on what they NEED to know – not what you WANT them to know.

### **Make students feel comfortable.**

- ✓ Arrive early and talk with students as they come in the room.
- ✓ Ask what they are working on in their classes.
- ✓ Ask what questions they have about the library.
- ✓ Let students know you are available outside of class to help them.
- ✓ Give students your contact information and encourage them to seek assistance.
- ✓ Break the ice by asking a few general questions and giving candy or other small prizes for correct answers. (This helps grab their attention at the beginning of the class.)
- ✓ Make a connection with what they already know.

### **Make the information relevant to the student.**

- ✓ Show students how to find the information needed to complete their assignment.
- ✓ Explain how they can save time and get better grades by using your research tips.
- ✓ Use examples relevant to the class.
- ✓ Demonstrate to students that they need your help.
  - Give a brief pretest with difficult questions to let the students see that they do need you.

### **Use active learning exercises to keep students interested.**

- ✓ Incorporate more interactive activities into BI sessions.
- ✓ Use activities to demonstrate concepts like Boolean operators.
  - Ask those wearing blue jeans and tennis shoes to stand up, then blue jeans or tennis shoes, etc...
- ✓ Let them work in groups or with a partner.
  - Divide the class into groups and have each group search a different database for information on the same topic. Have the groups report findings and you fill in the gaps.
  - Give pairs of students a magazine and a journal and have each group come up with a list of differences between the two.
- ✓ Keep the lecture brief.
  - Alternate between lecture and hands on activities.
  - Incorporate activities throughout the session instead of waiting to give a quiz at the end.

### **General tips**

- ✓ Have the classroom set up before the class arrives.
- ✓ Keep the students busy so they do not have time to play games or email.
- ✓ Use classroom control software to block games and chat.
- ✓ Ask open-ended questions and wait for an answer.
- ✓ Ask for topics from the class to use as search examples. (This can lead in unexpected directions, but it keeps you on your toes!)
- ✓ Don't stick too closely to a script. Your session can come off as dry and boring if it appears you are just reading from your notes or have everything memorized.
- ✓ Have a variety of active learning activities to select from, and pick and choose the ones you want to use in each session. Talk with colleagues to get ideas.

## **Information Literacy Electronic Lists**

Information Literacy Instruction discussion list

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrlbucket/is/ilil.htm>

Information Literacy discussion list

<http://www.ala.org/ala/aasl/aaslproftools/aasledisclist/INFOLIT.htm>

## **Helpful Websites**

Information Literacy Activities

<http://www.uwm.edu/Library/ris/instruction/ip/>

Links to websites on designing library assignments for faculty outside the library to help them use library resources effectively.

<http://www.lib.usf.edu/ref/ifrank/infolit.html#assign>

LOEX – Clearinghouse for Library Instruction

<http://www.emich.edu/public/loex/resources.html>

## **Interesting Reading**

Finley, Priscilla, Susie Skarl, Jennifer Cox, and Diane VanderPol. "Enhancing Library Instruction With Peer Planning." *Reference Services Review* 33.1 (2005): 112-22.

Gradowski, Gail, Loanne Snavely, and Paula Dempsey. *Designs for Active Learning: A Sourcebook of Classroom Strategies for Information Education*. Chicago: Association of College & Research Libraries, 1998.

Jacobson, Trudi E., Xu. *Motivating Students in Information Literacy Classes*. Neal-Schuman Publishers, Inc, 2004.

Lorenzen, Michael. *Active Learning and Library Instruction*. 2001. 21 April 2006.

<[www.libraryinstruction.com/active.html](http://www.libraryinstruction.com/active.html)>.

Manuel, Kate. "Teaching Information Literacy to Generation Y." *Journal of Library Administration* 36.1/2 (2002): 195-218.

For additional articles see the following bibliography:

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrlbucket/is/iscommittees/webpages/educationa/active.htm>