

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>.

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>