

CL Librarians' "Best Practices:" Lessons Learned Through Observation

D'Arcy Hutchings, Spring Semester 2011

Communicate with Professor

Ask to see the students' assignment as early as possible before the session.

Negotiate for readings, tutorials, ILL/Refworks account creation, a short free-write about their library experience, etc. to be assigned prior to the session.

Ask the professor during the session if he or she has anything to add.

Ask the professor for feedback, formal or informal, following the session.

Offer to help develop assignments in the future.

Connect With the Students

Greet students individually as they gather or enter the classroom. Use the empty time!

Ask students their names, their experience using the library or attending library sessions, and/or their topics.

Introduce yourself.

Make eye contact with each individual student.

Emphasize the benefit of the session at the beginning.

Make use of your space! Get out from behind the podium and wander around.

Guide Them Through the Content

Provide them with an overview – a roadmap – of the session's content and flow up front.

Briefly review the assignment near the beginning, if there is one, so the students have focus during the session.

If students don't come in with an assignment, create an exercise they can work on in class.

Use handouts (or a custom LibGuide). They may include supplemental information, an outline of the class session, and/or notes that help them repeat the process later on their own.

Encourage Engagement

Allow them to have a say in the content in some way. Ask them whether they can handle another topic toward the end if you are concerned about overload. Ask them if they would like you to cover topic x.

Ask the class very specific questions and *wait* for a response. If you wait long enough, someone will speak!

Incorporate active learning, such as breaking the class into groups and having them share with the class.

Allow for hands-on time! "Now you try!" "Now I'll stop talking and let you play!"

Incorporate hands-on time and/or activities throughout so they enforce each major concept you discuss, rather than lumping it all at the end.

