



InfoSkills PLUS: Your Key to Research Success

A non-credit information skills workshop series for undergraduates

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What is InfoSkills PLUS?

- A non-credit information skills workshop series consisting of two core workshops and a series of electives.
- Core workshops teach fundamental information literacy skills while electives are designed to enhance skills in a variety of areas (i.e. SMART Start Library, internet searching, evaluating & citing, in-depth database searching, essay writing).
- Students who complete both core workshops and at least three electives receive an InfoSkills PLUS certificate, issued by the Experience PLUS Program.

What is Experience PLUS?

- A program offered by Brock University's Career Services that facilitates the development of student career portfolios by tracking skills developed through paid jobs, volunteer opportunities, and workshop participation on a student's Experience PLUS record.

What is Learning Skills Services?

- A service offered by Brock University's Student Development Centre that provides instruction in essay writing, time management, note taking and other study skills.

Collaboration with Campus Partners

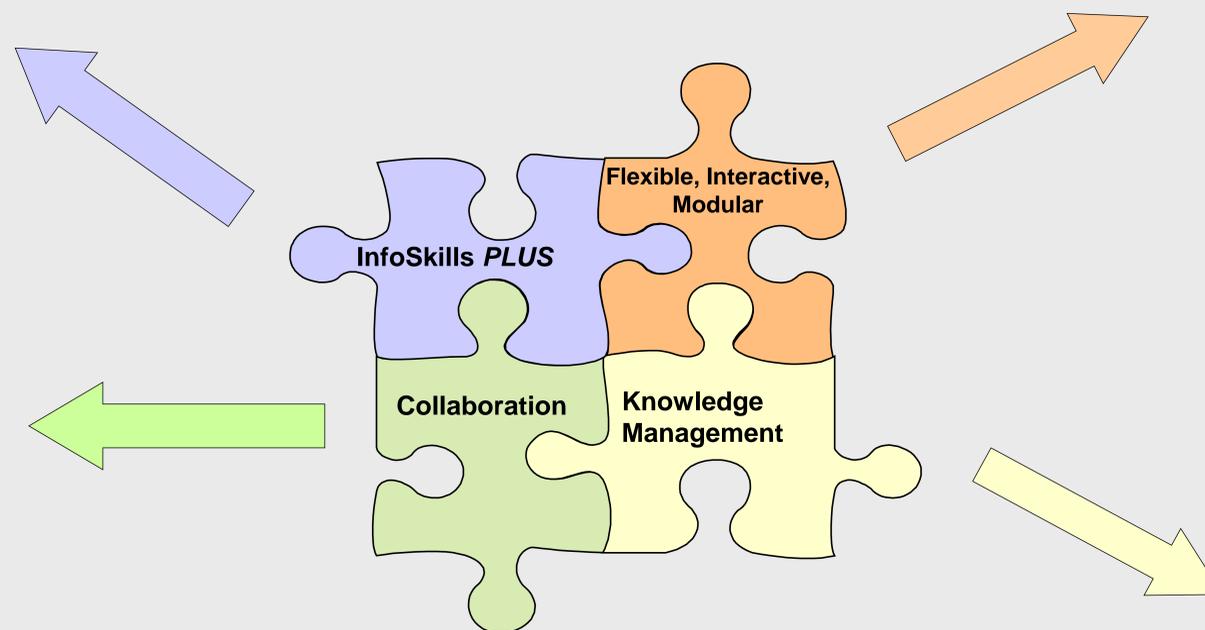
- We achieved buy-in with our key partners early in the planning process. The program's name and format capitalizes on the success of high visibility, student-oriented programs such as Experience PLUS and the Registrar's SMART Start summer orientation day.
- Collaboration produced monetary savings, reduced our administrative and instructional workloads, and generated valuable campus-wide publicity for our program.
- **Publicity Partners:** Our publicity vehicles were word-of-mouth publicity at partner-sponsored events, bookmarks, and web pages. The bookmark was designed by Experience PLUS staff with content supplied by the Library. Printing costs were shared equally. Bookmarks were included in SMART Start Orientation packages and distributed at various campus events during September. InfoSkills PLUS web pages were designed by the Library based on the bookmark concept.
- **Administrative Partners:** Library staff designed a web-based self-service workshop registration system. Instructors forwarded attendance lists to Experience PLUS for tracking on their Experience PLUS record.
- **Instructional partners:** The Essay Writing elective (already in place) was designed and delivered by Learning Skills staff. The SMART Start Library elective (already in place) is a popular 50 minute library orientation session targeted at first year students and was designed and delivered by Library staff. All other workshops are new and were designed and delivered by InfoSkills PLUS team members who co-taught each workshop.

Poster Abstract:

- Discover the advantages of collaborating with other campus partners to develop, promote, and deliver a unique non-credit interactive information skills workshop series.
- Learn the importance of flexibility, interactivity and modularity to the success of a non-credit information skills program.
- Learn how to incorporate the knowledge management practices of Learning Before, Learning During, and Learning After into team project activities.

Flexible, Interactive & Modular

- The InfoSkills PLUS workshop series was planned, developed, and delivered by a small team from the Library's Reference & Information Services Department.
- All workshops were designed to take place in the Library's new eClassroom, a flexible learning facility featuring movable furniture, a wireless Internet network, 2 LCD projectors, white boards, tackable walls, and 30 Acer tablet PCs.
- Workshops incorporate active learning exercises in an intimate and interactive setting. Workshops are 60-80 minutes long and class sizes are limited to 24. Students work in small groups (2-3 to a tablet PC) on a variety of online and offline active learning exercises. Library materials (reference sources, monographs, & periodicals) are brought into the classroom to facilitate discussion.
- The modular curriculum allows students to select workshops based on their interests. Electives can be added and modified to meet changing demands. Student participation is voluntary so the curriculum must meet their needs and be interesting and fun.



Putting the Pieces Together for Instructional Program Success



Students using tablet PCs in the eClassroom



One of many possible furniture configurations in the eClassroom



Publicity



Administration



Instruction



Learning Before



Learning During



Learning After

For more information:

Please contact the author by email at llowry@brocku.ca

Links:

- Brock University InfoSkills PLUS web page: <http://www.brocku.ca/library/infoskills.htm>
- Career Services Experience PLUS web page: <http://www.brocku.ca/expplus/index.phtml>
- Student Development Centre Learning Skills Services web page: <http://www.brocku.ca/sdc/learning/>
- After Action Reviews (NELH Knowledge Management Toolkit): http://www.nelh.nhs.uk/knowledge_management/km2/aar_toolkit.asp

Knowledge Management and Team Projects

- **Learning Before (Peer Assists):** learn from others who have completed similar projects before beginning your own task by reading published reports and getting advice from key people inside and outside of your organization.
- **Learning During (Informal After Action Reviews):** conduct brief meetings after specific events (e.g. workshops) so team members can share knowledge during the life of the project and immediately apply lessons learned.
 - Ask each team member to answer these 4 questions: *What was supposed to happen? What actually happened? Why were there differences? What did we learn?*
- **Learning After (Formal After Action Reviews):** conduct formal reviews at the end of each major project or at the end of a busy instructional term (before the team disbands) to review what happened, what went well, what needs improvement, and what lessons can be learned for the future.
- After Action Reviews are learning events – not performance evaluations. There must be a climate of trust and openness and a commitment to learn from both successes and mistakes. The focus is on continuous learning and process improvement.