How assessing student learning helped us focus our video production

Problem
8k new students each year who need to achieve a set of basic information literacy outcomes…
...and a shrinking library staff.

The Solution?
Videos!
...teach students concepts and skills like understanding peer review and finding articles
...include them in pre-session assignments and in research guides

However...
These videos take a long time to plan, record, edit and put up on the Web. They also require regular maintenance…so, we need to know… Do they work?

Approach
Recruitment
• Used email to ask for first-year student volunteers to participate in a one-hour session to help librarians improve video tutorials
• Volunteers signed up for one of 15 open slots using “you can book me” app
• Of 15 confirmed volunteers, 10 showed up for assessment sessions
• Participants received $10 Amazon gift cards

Assessment Design
• Participants were given a research scenario that had them find a book or article in various steps as a pre-test, and were asked to think aloud while performing each task
• Screencast software was used to record participants’ voices and screen movements
• Participants then viewed a video tutorial before once again completing the scenario

Analysis
• Quantitative analysis of task-completion rate
• Qualitative analysis of participant commentary

What Now?
Our takeaways
• The assessment told us that our videos are successful in helping students achieve intended learning outcomes, but that there might be less time-intensive ways to achieve the same outcomes.
• Based on our results, we decided to drastically cut our video production, freeing staff time to focus on other projects that give more return on investment.
• We ceased production of our “Tip Jar” video series that was designed to engage undergraduates.

Future directions
• We asked teaching librarians to think of common threshold concepts that they often address in classes, and may have a videographer help create these as high production value learning tools that can be incorporated into multiple classes across the curriculum.
• We are creating a shared repository of high quality learning objects that have proven through assessment to have a positive effect on student learning.

Findings
Before watching the video…
4 out of 5 (Find Books)
After watching the video…
4 out of 5

Seems like the Find Books video had no effect on student learning, but the Find Articles video doubled the number of successful students…

Themes
• Videos work best for concepts or visual skills
• Success of videos in teaching learning outcomes does not mean students would watch them “in the wild”
• Videos must be easily found if students are to use them

“I like to watch videos for complicated things, but I prefer text for simpler things. I’ll watch a video if the text doesn’t make sense.”

The part about finding a book was very clear. It was a good visual.”

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What now?
• Is this a conceptual issue that is complicated enough to necessitate a video, or would a step-by-step text guide suffice?
• Would this video serve a curricular need beyond the immediate use I have in mind (e.g. use in future flipped classes)?

Questions to ask ourselves before creating videos

Supporting Resources
80x1999
According to our Web analytics, for the 2013/2014 school year, Find Articles was viewed almost 500 times. That’s great….