

Transparency in tutorials and research guides

About students, With students, For students

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Design & Methodology

The Transparency in Learning and Teaching (TILT) framework, focus groups, usability testing using authentic assessment, and qualitative analysis.

Purpose & Goals

Librarians occasionally update tutorials and research guides but don't always know what student experiences of those tools is like. A two-year student-driven study aimed to Understand to what extent students perceive that the library's tutorials follow TILT framework recommendations of:

- Clear purpose in learning objective(s)
- Concise tasks that say exactly what to do
- Criteria for success in completing tasks, including examples

Findings

Nothing about students, made without students, can truly be for students. This research demonstrated new pathways for redesigning library content around 3 themes:

1. Students prefer to closely review examples and other success criteria that highlights what is important about a task (both purpose and procedure)
2. Unnecessary content could be perceived as deceptive and could interrupt reading patterns and other aspects of student performance.
3. Students were interested in brief, captioned videos and other content that was specific to their work at Whatcom Community College

Action & Impact

We began to programmatically assess student experiences of our tutorials and research guides. We completely designed the tutorial site and have a burgeoning method for mixing and reusing content on research guides to meet student needs within courses.

Practical Implications & Value

Our college community has come together through this work, and it has led to deeper partnerships with STEM faculty on research, instruction, and digital repositories. The authentic assessment is a lightweight tool to capture student needs and align library content and instruction with course and college goals.

