

ABSTRACT

Title: Using your byte: a collaborative approach to evaluating improvement in information literacy skills using Web 2.0 technologies for dental and oral health students: a pilot study

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Aims: The Liaison Librarian and first year Course Coordinators investigated ways to evaluate the information literacy skills of first year dental and oral health students. Instruction tailored to a specific assignment task was supported by an electronic assignment guide. Course tools on Blackboard, a virtual learning environment were trialled to reinforce the face-to-face instruction, deliver the e-guide, and to enable small group collaborative activity and evaluation of skills improvement.

Methodology: The methodology was completed in three stages. Stage one involved first year students completing a pre-test questionnaire and database search activity before attending small group tailored instruction. Following the instructional workshop, students repeated the same database search activity. Stage two involved students being given Blackboard access to an electronic assignment guide and personal research response forms for reflective activities. These activities were required to be completed and submitted with the written assignment for assessment. Stage three was conducted six weeks later, after the assignment had been submitted. It involved students completing the original pre-test questionnaire again and sitting an information literacy practical test worth 5% of the final grade.

Results and Discussion: Preliminary analysis of the results indicates that small group tailored instruction supported by an electronic assignment guide and reflective activities can improve students' information literacy skills. Web 2.0 technologies can be used to deliver instructional support and gain valuable feedback. The implications of this for future training will be discussed, together with the significance of librarian/lecturer collaboration.