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**Reflections on using iSpring quizzes for Information Literacy training at Middlesex University.**

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**Introduction**

Time constraint in a library workshop is a common dilemma: how to keep students engaged but not spend all the time on practical activities at the expense of learning information literacy (IL) theory.

iSpring software uses PowerPoint slides and makes them interactive to deliver online quizzes. Monna was impressed by the speed and ease of creating bespoke quizzes and immediately saw the potential to use this to deliver aspects of information literacy workshops, especially for those students for whom English is not a first language.[1]

Vivienne was responding to similar constraints regarding teaching first year undergraduates; how to use an increasing number of resources in a one off workshop during the first term. She had also received enquiries from academics who had been approached by Pearson, offering to sell them IL e-learning packages. These packages were costly[2] and not tailored to the specifics of how our resources work at Middlesex.

Our nursing colleagues Jodie Ward and Jo Wilson had used a paper quiz format for some IL sessions with students working in groups to find their way around University resources in order to answer questions. These sessions really engaged the students, encouraged peer learning, exploration and learning by doing. From a teacher's perspective they do away with unnecessary demonstrations and mean many of the students will teach each other. The librarian becomes the facilitator, providing one to one support with each group. The peer learning and independent exploration elements of the activity as well as feedback and discussion creates a blended learning dynamic.

Psychology undergraduate sessions happened in the fifth week of term, so from a constructivist learning perspective you are able to draw on existing knowledge and confirm things they have picked up themselves in the first few weeks, as well as adding to their understanding of resources currently being used. The online format of the iSpring quizzes allowed us to take what was successful from the paper quizzes and put them online. Something module leaders wanted with a move towards blended learning in a climate where contact time is squeezed. Unlike PowerPoint slides, iSpring gives the students something participative to come back to in the VLE or subject guide, an interactive refresher for students learning or revising independently.

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[1] Monna Rizvi's quizzes can be found here http://libguides.mdx.ac.uk/psg/ps
[2] Quote of roughly £10k for approx. 1,200 students in the Psychology department

## Design

iSpring offers a wide range of question formats including: several varieties of multiple-choice, matching questions, hot-spotting, cloze exercises as well as ungraded free text survey options. iSpring allows you to include visuals and video. Vivienne used screenshot visuals and instructions to guide students through resources, however, one limitation we found is that iSpring does not currently allow you to embed an externally hosted video, only link out to it.

Vivienne also looked at Socrative which allows for simpler quiz creation but decided that the extensive options in iSpring provided the means to better engage the students and avoid the habit of form filling or guessing their way through a quiz. A learning behaviour we don't think you can eradicate but do think you can steer students away from with the design of a quiz. For instance in the Psychology induction quiz there's a question about their free Kortext personal e-textbook[3] in which they needed to enter the full title. Those trying to skip through got part of the title from the thumbnail of the book, but quickly found they needed to access the ebook to view the full information and answer the question.[4]

An enjoyable part of the creative process is developing 'trick' questions that test students' common misconceptions such as 'Google will find more relevant and specific information on my essay topic.' These questions often stimulate the most informative class discussions. Students pass 'ungraded questions' automatically but the librarian is emailed their answers in order to monitor progress.

Keeping it simple is key; with so many options and possible configurations there is the temptation to create something extravagant, but like all similar software it is possible to detract from the content and learning objectives.  Testing is also paramount; an important part of the design process was having colleagues and students attempt the quiz. Wording and phrasing is perhaps one of the most important factors if you are going to give students the chance to independently find their way around resources. Testing pre-empts instructions or questions which may be misinterpreted which is particularly important for students looking at new concepts or ideas.

## Delivery

Monna used quizzes about referencing and British culture with new Pre-sessional students[5], for all of whom English is a second language. Vivienne used induction quizzes encouraging students to interact with TALIS Aspire Online reading lists, the library catalogue, requesting books, introducing journals, free Kortext personal e-textbooks, classification and the library subject guides.  Particular elements of each quiz were tailored to students' module resources.

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[3] https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/your-study/etextbooks and https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/your-study/etextbooks/benefits-of-etextbooks

[4] You can attempt to make these questions fair for dyslexic/those with poor spelling by adding multiple variations to the answer with common misspellings when you create correct answers.

[5] Pre-sessional students come to Middlesex roughly 6-8 weeks before their degrees begin to improve their English.

The induction quizzes were employed for Undergraduate Psychology first years [6] and all Psychology Postgraduate student inductions[7]. All quizzes were completed in class in pairs or small groups. First years have no follow up sessions in the first term[8]. Postgraduate students had a ninety minute literature searching class the following week.

In Undergraduate sessions the introductory quiz was followed by a larger-group 'keyword brainstorm' activity in relation to media images of group behaviour. This was a useful way to vary the class with discussion and keep the students engaged. This was then followed by a second iSpring quiz prompting students to search Google Scholar and Summon, comparing the two in order to answer further questions.

Our iSpring quizzes were put on our Library Subject Guides (Springshare) as a file, stored on Springshare servers. They cannot be embedded but will open in a new browser tab. There were not any problems with speed or usage even with a fully attended class.

## Reflection

There is a risk that students may 'surface learn' or succumb to 'form filling behaviour', ticking boxes until they get something right, although we felt that iSpring reduced this risk compared to competing products. Vivienne considered the risks during the design process, including several 'trick questions' to challenge common misconceptions and varied activities such as correctly sequencing according to the Dewey Decimal System. Most struggled with this, and if you include enough books this one is almost impossible to get through by guessing!

Classes are often difficult to pitch at the right level with new students having varying IL and IT skills. The peer learning element of completing quizzes in teams allows students to share knowledge that they have built and for others to have information explained by peers rather than a teacher. Vivienne observed that not only did people help out their own group members, but also students from other groups. Monna noticed that the quizzes resonated with student competiveness in a fun and friendly manner.

100% of 273 students (working in groups and pairs) passed the quizzes from Vivienne's Undergraduate sessions. Some took the quiz twice in order to pass but she asked them to tell her so they could have a discussion about relevant resources or ideas before they reattempted.

The feedback and grading system in iSpring is easy to use and allows for branching and reviewing answers so that the learning is reinforced throughout. Having the option to receive individual feedback via email helps to evaluate the learning taking place for each student and highlights areas where more work is needed. Reviewing answers to free text questions allows you as teacher to get closer to how much students have really understood, without pre provided options.

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[6] Links to 1st year UG quizzes 'Introduction to library resources' and 'Summon vs Google: searching for journal articles' at the top of this webpage http://libguides.mdx.ac.uk/psy
Links to PG induction 'Introduction to library resources' http://libguides.mdx.ac.uk/psy/PGintro
[7] Links to PG induction 'Introduction to library resources' http://libguides.mdx.ac.uk/psy/PGintro
[8] They receive an additional session on referencing and evaluating materials in the Spring term.

One way to encourage deeper learning may be introducing the quizzes as a form of assessment, whether formative or graded.  In our experience this helps students give IL more legitimacy by being semantically linked with something the module leader wants them to know.

Looking forward we would need to think hard about the kind of additional exercises which could be created on iSpring to help students. Perhaps more complex or theoretical elements of literature searching may not be suitable and we suspect it may be best as a supplementary learning resource or method used to review students' skills and knowledge.