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ABSTRACT

The goals of Kenyon College's (Ohio) Summer Institute on Academic Information Resources are to expose a select group of faculty and students to the many academic information resources available both on the Internet as well as locally on campus and to promote the use of these resources by faculty and students to affect innovative changes in the curriculum of the first and second years of undergraduate study. To achieve these goals, a 4-day workshop is conducted each summer. Institute instructors developed a 280-page workbook which provides documentation to accompany each presentation, hands-on exercise, and group discussion. This paper discusses what went into designing and developing the summer institute, and attempts to highlight aspects of the institute and workbook which have led to the institute's success. The institute process examines: (1) creating a steering committee to establish goals, objectives, and resource topics; (2) completing the participant selection process; (3) participant pre-institute assignments; (4) exploring Internet resources; (5) individual instructor preparation for presenting the tools or resources for which they are responsible; and (6) compiling the workbook. The summer institute program itself includes panel discussions, general discussions, presentations, exercises, and a team assignment in which each team is assigned a hypothetical course for which they must design a portion of the syllabus, lecture, or research project. Finally, the future of the summer institute is discussed. (MAS)

Designing and Delivering a Summer Institute on Academic Information Resources

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The Summer Institute on Academic Information Resources (SIAIR) at Kenyon College has been funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. The goals of the Summer Institute on Academic Information Resources are to expose a select group of faculty and students to the many academic information resources available both on the Internet as well as locally on campus and to promote the use of these resources by faculty and students to affect innovative changes in the curriculum of the first and second years of undergraduate study.

To achieve these goals, an intense four day workshop is conducted each summer. This workshop involves presentations by staff members of the Information and Computing Services (ICS) division and Library, demonstrations, hands-on exercises and panel discussions which concentrate on specific information and learning resources. These resources are organized into three themes: Information Discovery, Communication and Collaboration, and The Empowered Learner. The workshop is structured to permit ample time and opportunity for open discussion and independent exploration. Thus the workshop is both structured and unstructured in its approach to meeting these goals.

The institute instructors developed a 280 page workbook which provides documentation to accompany each presentation, hands-on exercises, and group discussion. This workbook has twice won the ACM (Association for Computing Machinery) SIGUCCS (Special Interest Group for University and College Computing Services) first place award for Printed Materials in the Education and Training Materials Competition (1993, 1994).

This paper discusses what went into designing and delivering the summer institute and will attempt to highlight important aspects of the institute and workbook which have led to its success. The summer institute has been held once in both of the last two years and is scheduled to be delivered twice this summer (June, August).

SIAIR's success is partly grounded in its widespread support by senior administrators who were some of the founding authors of the PEW Charitable Trust grant proposal. Having senior administrators involved at the beginning who understand the importance of information technology in the curriculum and its ability to enhance learning was a key to creating and sustaining a high level of energy and motivation. The summer institute generated a great deal of interest and excitement in the participants. This excitement and enthusiasm spread to non-participating faculty as well as the participants shared

the wealth of their new knowledge. This interest and excitement built momentum into the second summer s institute. The third year finds the level of excitement and interest exceeding expectations such that a third and fourth institute is being planed to accommodate the increase demand.

SIAIR begins each year with a steering committee made up representatives of the ICS and the Library (all of the staff instructors), faculty and students. There are approximately sixteen members of which three are faculty and three are students. It is absolutely essential to include representatives of all constituencies: faculty, staff, and students. Students provide a unique perspective on how the goals and objectives of the institute will relate to the student population as a whole. The students comment on how other students will react to ways faculty might implement the various resources and information resources in their classes. Their input provides valuable insight into what strategies might be most effective. And of course the faculty members provide their unique perspective on issues they feel will be most important to the faculty. Thus the committee has direct input from each constituency during the planning phase on how to design, organize, and schedule the summer institute.

The committee establishes goals and objectives, resource topics, participant selection criteria, solicits participant applications, chooses participants, and establishes the date for the summer institute. This steering committee meets approximately every two weeks beginning four months prior to the start of the first summer institute. The steering committee concludes a series of approximately four to five meetings having decided who will participate, who will teach, what will be taught, when it will be taught, what documentation needs to be be prepared, and having assigned a pre-institute assignment to the faculty participants.

Faculty participants must apply by submitting a description of why they feel their participation is necessary and what they expect to gain from attending. The Pew grant allowed the funding of $500 for each participant for the four day institute. Though payment was seen as a necessary method to encourage participation for the first summer institute the value and success of the summer institute alone now seems adequate to spur new participants. Another, and perhaps more resourceful, alternative to paying faculty to participate would be to award faculty some tangible item (i.e. computing hardware or software), of equal value and important to their academic endeavors.

The pre-institute assignments provide the instructors with a mechanism to insures that all the participants are comfortable to the same degree with certain fundamental resources and tools. The assignments include detailed instructions on how to use some basic information resources. The information resources are both electronic and paper based. Information resources of most interest are composed of both computing hardware and software tools used to access electronic information as well as periodicals, abstracts, indexes, and media traditionally found in the library. The information resources identified as fundamental are electronic mail, Internet discussion lists (listservs), the library s online public access catalog (OPAC), netnews (Usenet News), and VAX Notes (VMS based conference software). A subgroup of instructors serve to provide support to the participants in seeing that they are able to complete the assignments.

Shortly before the start of the institute the instructors follow up with the participants in a group meeting to survey the participants and determine which of the information resources they have experience with

other than the fundamental resources identified in the pre-institute assignment. The instructors explain the summer institute in more detail and discuss what to expect. This is also an opportunity for the instructors to ask specific questions of the participants as to where their academic interest lie, what sorts of information they seek to use in their courses, and based on what they know so far of the summer institute, what they expect to get out of it. This survey allows the instructors to tailor the institute to meet the needs of the participants. By the time the summer institute begins the instructors should know as much as possible about the general goals and expectations of the participants and should have the institute custom designed to meet those goals and expectations. It is important to make the institute experience relevant and worthwhile.

A functional goal of Kenyon s SIAIR is to cover the major computing resources for accessing information on the Internet as well as materials in the college library. These resources include Gopher, Online Public Access Catalog, KCInfo (campus wide information service), Lexis/Nexis, FirstSearch, Dialog, government publications, audio visual material (microforms, slides, video, music), Internet discussion lists, newsgroups, VAX Notes, Netscape, courseware and multimedia, and software which supports or enhances collaborative learning. The resources explored are appropriate to the goals of the summer institute.

It is important to distinguish the function and purpose of each information resource so that the participants have a clear understanding of when the use of each resource is appropriate.. Each presentation is scheduled to support the three themes (Information Discovery, Communication and Collaboration, The Empowered Leaner). Each theme is explored through a series of presentations, hands-on exercises, and individual explorations. The key here is that the institute must be designed and presented in a logical fashion so as to impress upon the participants that each tool has a unique purpose.

It is not important to focus on the mechanics of the individual tools used to access information as much as it is to focus on how to apply the tools, the issues involved in their use, and the information they access. The summer institute offers and opportunity for faculty to explore and discover new resources. Faculty should leave the summer institute with a better understanding of on how to incorporate the use of the various academic information resources in their courses. Each presentation and hands-on exercise is carefully designed to provide basic instruction in the use of each resource so that faculty can achieve competency while at the same time exploring the pedagogical implications of these information resources.

Another significant goal of the summer institute is to empower faculty to incorporate the various information resources in their courses with limited support from the staff in either the Library or ICS. Faculty should be able to empower students to extend their reach for information and allow them to critically evaluate new information. Reducing the amount of support from ICS and Library staff is a beneficial side-effect of empowering faculty and students.

Each individual instructor is responsible for presenting the tool(s) or resource(s) for which they are responsible for supporting or teaching under normal circumstances. Therefore, each instructor prepares their own documentation, hands-on exercises, and presentation. The documentation is prepared in a generic format by each instructor with minimal page formatting. It is crucial that the documentation

contain many samples of what the screen will look like when using various computing tools. There should be an ample number of exercises within each document as well. All included exercises should be up-to-date and tested to make sure they still work.

Each document is submitted in its electronic format to one person whose sole responsibility is the overall formatting, based upon a predetermined format, and printing of the final documents. Having one person responsible for formatting the document ensures that all the documents have a consistent look. This person is responsible for combining the documents into the final workbook. Each document appears in the workbook in the same order as it is presented during the workshop. A table of contents and index is created after all the documents are finalized. Each instructor contributes to a glossary and bibliography which result from their individual documents.

It is important to encourage the participants to take notes. Therefore, the workbook documentation is designed with large left margins of three inches. This provides ample space in the margin for participants to take notes. An alternative to this might be to provide a Notes page at the end of each individual document. The workbook is designed for a three ring binder which facilitates the easy addition of material as changes become necessary. Invariably, something changes about one or more of the information resources from the time the document is printed to the time it is presented. The three ring binder allows simple changes to be made at the last minute. A page can be reprinted and handed out before the start of the day's presentations or just prior to the presentation itself.

The binder used is one which contains pockets on the inside of the front and back covers to hold additional material distributed later but not inserted into the workbook. The front of the binder contains a transparent plastic cover under which a cover sheet can be placed. For each workbook the name of the participant is printed on the cover sheet in the lower right-hand corner. This gives the workbook a nice personal touch and also helps minimize the chance of workbooks getting lost or picked-up by the wrong person.

The workbook is organized in the same order as the schedule of the institute and then delivered to each participant on the first day of the institute. Faculty can easily follow the flow of each presentation, exercise, and discussion with the aid of the workbook. Filled with many examples and exercises, the workbook becomes a valuable reference well after the institute. In addition the workbook is provided to the Internet community via FTP or Gopher (and soon WWW browsers) as a series of ASCII text and Postscript files). In order to protect the identity and integrity of the workbook, it is not offered in the original WordPerfect file format since this would allow its format to altered.

In addition to the workbook each participant receives a coffee cup premium (Koozie Kup) custom designed with the instituted title and logo. Though the cups serve a functional use, they also server a strategic purpose for advertising the institute. A simple and yet practical public relations device for promoting the summer institute.

Each of these themes are presented and explored in several sessions designed for the academic information resources or tools for which they support, or a panel discussion which engages faculty to discuss pedagogical issues (see schedule on page 9). The presentation and hands-on sessions involve one presenter leading the participants through an explanation of a tool or resource and sample exercises.

Other instructors remain as coaches roaming among the participants and available to assist them with the hands-on exercises. Each presentation is followed with ample time for hands-on exercises. The hands-on exercises need to be applicable and provide some sort of beneficial reward that suits the interest of the participant.

The panel discussions have evolved from the first summer institute in which the instructors served as the discussion facilitators to the current model in which selected faculty from the previous summer s institute return to facilitate the panel discussions. Returning faculty (Summer Institute alumni/alumnae) provide an invaluable resource to the participants by sharing their experiences of how they are incorporating new academic information resources in their courses or research. The past participants are able to provide practical examples as well as tips and pitfalls which fuel lively discussion. Discussions should be designed as an opportunity to explore ideas and concerns and a chance to assure participants that the summer institute is an opportunity to examine ways to enhance learning and not a prescription for tenure and promotion.

A period at the end of each day is assigned for general discussion. This allows the participants the opportunity to voice any questions, concerns, or issues they may have with the material being presented. The participants are encouraged to lead this discussion and the instructors an opportunity to listen and make any necessary adjustments for the next day.

Throughout the presentations, exercises, and discussions the instructors attempt to weave in important issues dealing with tradeoffs, costs, and technology. Such issues as copyright, censorship, quality of information, attribution, source of information, morality, and netiquette are repeatedly brought up as they affect or are affected by the various academic information resources being explored. In addition, topics dealing with pedagogical goals such as preparation, support, credit toward promotion and tenure, empowering and enabling students, developing an individual knowledge base, extending the classroom, and assessment are explored. It is important to discuss the negative sides of information technology as well as the positives.

Discussion topics include how time spent teaching and using these new resources in class might be managed, the cost of implementing and supporting information technology, how reliable are these resources and the tools used to access them.

The four day institute begins each day at 8:30 a.m. and ends at 4:30 p.m.. Since the institute is an intense exposure to new resources it is important to keep participants involved and engaged. The schedule for the hands-on exercises and panel discussions should vary from day to day so that the schedule does not become predictable and monotonous. There should be at least one 15-20 minute break in the morning and afternoon. Additional breaks are beneficial after a series of hands-on exercises to prevent participants from feeling too overwhelmed. It is important to design the schedule so that participants move periodically from one location to another and are able to stretch and relax between sessions. The Kenyon Summer Institute is designed to present the various resources in one of the college s public computing labs (reserved in advance for the summer institute). Library materials and resources are presented in the Library, a short walking distance across campus. Panel discussions are conducted in various large and small groups and located in a room with comfortable seating and informal atmosphere.

It is important to schedule room assignments with the necessary resources and number of participants in mind. Good acoustics, air conditioning, and lighting are a few crucial factors which significantly influence how engaged or distracted the participants become. It is vital to make sure all audio, video, and computing equipment is running properly and reliably. Backup equipment should be ready in case of any problems. Light snacks should be made available during the breaks. It is important to keep in mind that the participants will be seated through most of the day and the snacks should be prepared with this in mind. Providing ample hot coffee and juice is important as well. The success of the summer institute depends partly on minimizing, if not avoiding, distractions, discomfort, and frustration experienced by the participants.

Expect the participants to come with varying learning styles. Instructors who aren' t presenting, but who are assisting the participants, become coaches, and need to be sensitive to the needs of the participants. Some participants will need to have difficult concepts explained so that they understand the big picture. Other participants will need to be shown exactly how to perform difficult tasks. It is important to be patient and identify what learning style each participant is accustomed to and share this information with other instructors who will then be prepared when they encounter these participants. Monitor the participants for frustration or confusion and attend to them immediately. Take extra time to bring slower participants up to speed. The goal is to avoid or minimize the chance of any participant becoming disengaged.

During the latter stage of the summer institute the participants are assigned to one of three teams. The teams are predetermined so that each will consists of participants from various academic disciplines. Each team is then assigned a hypothetical course for which they must design a portion of a syllabus, lecture, or research project. This activity requires that the teams seek out various academic information resources to either research their topic or support their hypothetical syllabus. The participants must become more intimately aware of what materials the various information resources offer for their topic. Thus, this activity becomes a practical exercise from which they are better informed and prepared about information resources they might want to introduce to their own students.

Before beginning their group assignment each participant is allotted two to three hours to explore the various information resources with the assistance of individual instructors. This allows participants to visit any resource they might be interested in reviewing with some one-on-one assistance. Participants must then work together in their teams to develop a plan and assign individual tasks. This activity is assigned in the afternoon on the third day and continues through the morning on the fourth day. It culminates with three team reports which describe what information resources their hypothetical course would utilize and how each resource would be implemented. The teams are encouraged to speak to pedagogical goals and issues related to the use of technology.

A small percentage of the participants are often a bit skeptical about the value of information technology and its use in accessing academic information, even after four days of hearing, seeing and experiencing information technology to access academic information. These participants sense that they are being presented with a big sales pitch. They 're not sure if they want these new resources or if they really need them. Some perceive that new institutional standards for teaching are being established to fix something they don t think is broken. Therefore, it is important not to appear prescriptive or

imposing. The summer institute is an opportunity to prepare faculty who then can provide informal advice on strategic planning for information technology and resources.

The week ends on a positive note with a little fun and entertainment by demonstrating software and equipment which are examples of the future of information technology. This is a time to show off some of the leading technology and how it might be incorporated into the academic environment. Focus on technology that supports the goals of the institute. For example, the participants especially enjoyed a demonstration of white-board software with which two users modified and annotated a document. One used a desktop computer connected to a local area network and the other used a pen-based wireless palmtop microcomputer connected to the network and was able to move around the room during the demonstration.

The institute steering committee reconvenes the participants for a reunion approximately six months after the completion of the institute. The six month period between the institute and the reunion allows the participants to further explore and implement new academic information resources and determine their true value. The reunion provides an opportunity for the participants to share success stories and discuss, in specific terms, how they are implementing new academic information resources in their courses. The participants provide vital feedback on how they feel the summer institute went, how valuable the documentation is, what material could be left out or enhanced, and suggestions for designing the next summer institute. In addition paper and e-mail surveys are conducted to get specific feedback for assessing the value and effectiveness of the summer institute.

During the year following the summer institute, faculty participants from the previous summer's institute are encouraged to apply for a Course Development Opportunity. Faculty submit a proposal for redesigning an existing course or developing a new course which implements new academic information resources. Their proposals are judged on the basis of the goals presented during the summer institute, the number of students impacted by the course, and whether the course is designed for freshmen and sophomore students.. Faculty chosen to complete a Course Development Opportunity receive a $1000 stipend to be used to support the completion of their proposed design over a four week period during the summer. Faculty are encouraged to have the assistance of one or two students who also receive a $1000 stipend. Students are chosen based upon an application they must submit which is judged on their knowledge of the academic information resources involved and their knowledge of the course material or discipline.

The Summer Institute in Academic Information Resources at Kenyon College will no longer be funded after the summer of 1995. Regardless, current plans are to continue offering the summer institute while there are still faculty who need to learn about the various academic information resources. Due to the increase demand by prospective participants, as evident in our need to schedule two institutes this coming summer, we do not expect to compensate faculty participants for their involvement in future institutes. This should reduce the required funding to only the costs of the materials involved in producing the workbook. Of course, there is still the hidden cost of the time instructors spend preparing new and modifying existing documentation, exercises, and presentations, and the time spent involved with instructing and coaching during the week of the institute, all of which is time spent away from normal job duties.

As information technology becomes more prevalent as a means for storing, delivering and managing vast amounts of academic information, and the Internet becomes the vehicle for accessing that information, faculty must learn how to implement the various information resources and tools throughout the curriculum. An intense week long summer institute provides the time, expertise, and environment to tackle the challenge of getting faculty to learn and understand the various resources that can serve as valuable teaching or learning tools. Involving staff, faculty, and students in the design and planning process insures total representation and helps to foster a learning centered environment while diminishing the importance of roles and hierarchies. In addition, broad representation encourages campus support and promotes a strong sense of commitment to achieving success.