

## Building a Participatory Culture: Collaborating with Student Organizations for Twenty-first Century Library Instruction

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### Abstract

Today's students are critical thinkers, collaborators, and creators. They expect to participate in twenty-first century learning environments not as passive information consumers (think lectures), but as active contributors (think team-based problem-solving). There are opportunities for instruction librarians to collaborate directly with student-led organizations. These partnerships have the potential to increase attendance at library events and provide platforms for students to engage in richer forms of exploratory learning that incorporate twenty-first century skills. This article will discuss the literature surrounding library instruction collaborations, identify "Librarian-Student Organization Collaborations" as an important form of partnership, and supply specific case studies of successful library instruction events based on these collaborations.

### Introduction

Twenty-first century students are not passive consumers of information; rather, their learning experiences must involve active participation. Current pedagogies call for creative learning partnerships that engage students in a participatory culture.<sup>1</sup> In terms of information literacy (IL) instruction, these collaborative relationships must include learner-librarian, learner-content, and learner-learner interactions. The Partnership for twenty-first Century Skills, a national organization in the United States that promotes quality education at all levels with a special focus on a "Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning," recognizes collaboration and communication skills as an essential component of education.<sup>2</sup> These skills are para-

mount not only for students, but also for instruction librarians.

This article reviews the literature about campus partnerships surrounding library instruction programs. It makes a case for directing focus towards engaging student-led groups and participating alongside students in collaborative activities. Discussion of three successful case studies of librarian-student alliances demonstrates the full potential of this type of learning experience: inviting a student organization to peer-teach in the library, embedding directly into a campus-wide Alternate Reality Game, and partnering with a student-led branch of student government for successful programming.



## Literature Review

Almost no literature exists documenting collaboration with student-led groups for library instruction, especially referring to high volume turnout. To build a case for why collaboration with student-led groups works, this literature review demonstrates that collaboration has established value and recorded successes in a variety of existing collaborative relationships and that librarians eagerly seek new partnership opportunities. This literature review also places library instruction in the context of twenty-first century learning paradigms, including the *Revised Bloom's Taxonomy*,<sup>3</sup> the *Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills*,<sup>4</sup> and the new media literacies required for participatory culture.<sup>5</sup>

Library partnerships are well documented, not necessarily as a kind of underwriter to success, but as a fairly reliable mechanism for better results and as a means to spread limited resources further. The conventional process is to include partners in activities, and then success usually follows. As described in the literature, library instruction collaborations usually include the following:

- *Librarian – Course Collaboration*  
This vector includes traditional course-integrated instruction and the current trend toward embedded librarianship.<sup>6</sup>
- *Librarian – Community Collaboration*  
Both public and academic libraries have a history of reaching out community-wide to a variety of groups including senior citizens,<sup>7</sup> youths,<sup>8</sup> multicultural groups,<sup>9</sup> correctional facilities,<sup>10</sup> schools<sup>11</sup> and other groups.<sup>12</sup>
- *Librarian – Librarian Collaboration*<sup>13</sup>

While these are perhaps the most common partnerships described in the field, librarians also regularly engage in collaborative instruction relationships, including reference consultations (librarian – learner collaboration), subject specialization (librarian – department collaboration), and librarian – faculty collaboration.

The term “information literacy” (IL) is prevalent in articles discussing these partnerships.<sup>14</sup> One important partnership, however, commonly seems to be excluded: on-campus partnerships with student-led organizations (Librarian – Student Organization Collaboration). One author hints that student-led groups could be explored for collaboration opportunities,<sup>15</sup> but no actual relationship is described outside of established avenues of contact with administration-run university programs such as residence hall life, athletics, Dean of Students offices, religious organizations, etc. (Librarian – Campus Organization Collaboration).<sup>16</sup> This article begins to fill the void in library literature by adding three case studies of partnerships with student-led groups at a large university.

Many authors express a general interest in expanding instruction endeavors beyond academic divisions.<sup>17</sup> There is also interest in moving library instruction beyond traditional methods as librarians find that the old modes of teaching no longer work.<sup>18</sup> Peer-learning and the success of programming that utilizes methods of peer-learning are documented in library literature.<sup>19</sup> Many librarians seem to be employing and even anticipating some of the components of twenty-first century learning and models for considering digital media literacy, although a clear connection to the educational foundations for these literacies is often lacking.<sup>20</sup> Bloom's taxonomy, perhaps the most well known foundation for developing educational objectives, has been an established criterion for framing IL programming,<sup>21</sup> however librarians have not widely embraced the revised taxonomy.

## Librarian–Student Organization Collaboration

Student-led organizations prepare learners to enter the “real world.” Through active engagement in affiliations of their choice, students learn skills – such as collaboration and communication skills – that will help them succeed beyond graduation. In other words, universities exist as a platform for

building chances for students to participate in activities, both academic and social. Universities embrace a participatory culture, one in which students form new affiliations, try on new identities, and explore new forms of expression. Students are expected to contribute and create through a variety of collaborative activities both inside and outside of class. Libraries must fit into the participatory culture as well by moving from individually-based content consumption modes of instruction to more collaborative, team-based, and creation-centered library instruction activities. One way to shift this focus is by working directly with student-led organizations to develop library instruction that meets their needs.

Traditionally, the life cycle of a library instruction event evolves totally within the confines of the library. In most cases, a librarian designs a class or workshop hoping for success and really believing the event to be fun and original – surely students will come if the event is fun – until, sadly, the event is written off as a colossal failure considering the time expended on planning and running the event. Librarians continue to lament poor attendance at information literacy events.<sup>22</sup> Or, in the situation of a typical bibliographic instruction session, students are forced to acquire information-seeking skills at a time that may not be optimal for them.

Collaboration with student organizations harmonizes with the goals of instruction librarians. Librarians want to reach as many students as possible and large numbers of students can be found within student organizations. Direct collaboration with student-led organizations increases student turnout while reducing planning time for librarians. The key is to identify student-led organizations that have information needs aligned with the library's mission – a process that requires out-of-the-box thinking and an entrepreneurial spirit. To capitalize on these opportunities, librarians must be flexible and adaptable. Above all, they must work quickly with diverse student populations. Once a partnership is established, li-

brarians must allow student leaders to become fully involved in the process. By engaging the students in the planning, librarians reap the benefits of the endless energy and enthusiasm, creativity and innovation, productivity and social leadership embodied in twenty-first century learners. They also open possibilities for peer-led instruction. When students are given ownership of the process, they will participate in the event in surprising and even extraordinary numbers, as the three case studies from a large university, below, demonstrate.

### Twenty-first Century Skills: An Overview

Over the past decade, academic librarians carved out an instruction niche by becoming leaders in IL instruction. The importance of IL as a twenty-first century skill is indisputable. Several educational theorists point to the library as the appropriate venue for teaching information retrieval, evaluation, and application skills. In particular, the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills applauds the efforts of the American Association of School Librarians (AASL) in their *Intellectual and Policy Foundations*:

The promotion of information literacy is a hallmark of the AASL, a long time advocate of traditional literacy in school libraries. The Partnership shares their conviction, recognizing that the worlds of work, higher education, and personal life increasingly demand the ability to 1) access information efficiently and effectively, 2) evaluate information critically and competently, and 3) use information accurately and creatively.<sup>23</sup>

In his flagship white paper on the new media literacies that twenty-first century learners need in order to flourish, Jenkins specifically mentions the role of libraries and librarians:

Beyond core literacy, students need research skills. Among other things, they need to know how to access books and articles through a library; to take notes on and integrate secondary sources; to assess

the reliability of data; to read maps and charts; to make sense of scientific visualizations; to grasp what kinds of information are being conveyed by various systems of representation; to distinguish between fact and fiction, fact and opinion; to construct arguments and marshal evidence. If anything, these traditional skills assume even greater importance as students venture beyond collections that have been screened by librarians and into the more open space of the web. Some of these skills have traditionally been taught by librarians who, in the modern era, are reconceptualizing their role less as curators of bounded collection and more as information facilitators who can help users find what they need, online or off, and can cultivate good strategies for searching material.<sup>24</sup>

However, the librarian's role in the twenty-first century landscape should not end with teaching IL skills. As instructors, librarians should be aware of the broad range of new literacies that will prepare learners to succeed in an increasingly interdisciplinary, international, and collaborative world. Going beyond awareness, librarians should strive to incorporate a variety of twenty-first century skills and pedagogies into instruction. There are three frameworks that stand as invaluable tools for librarians who wish to integrate a broad range of literacies into instruction: the Revised Bloom's Taxonomy, Jenkins' New Media Literacies, and the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills' "Framework for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning." In the case studies section of this article, these frameworks are used to analyze specific instances of information literacy collaborations with student-led organizations at a large academic library.

### Revised Bloom's Taxonomy

Mid-twentieth century pedagogies like Bloom's *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* positioned students in a role as consumers of content. The highest order skills that students could achieve were "evaluation," "synthesis," and "analysis."<sup>25</sup> That is, students

performing at the most complex cognitive level would be able to take content and engage in "evaluation" (appraisal, selection, defense, etc.) of that information. Lorin Anderson published a second revised edition of the canonized work in 2001.<sup>26</sup> Most notably, *A Taxonomy For Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives* moved learners into an active content-creation role. In this current model, the highest cognitive level is "creating." Overall, the new Bloom's Taxonomy consists of six divisions. From the lowest to the highest order skill, they are as follows: 1) remembering, 2) understanding, 3) applying, 4) analyzing, 5) evaluating, and 6) creating.<sup>27</sup>

As instruction librarians, there is an opportunity to reach learners at the highest levels, going beyond the recall and understanding of content and into the higher-level skills of evaluating information and creating new products. In the case studies below, the "Mind Mashup" event stands as a successful example of library instruction that engages students in the highest order skill, "creating."

### Participatory Culture

Just as the revision of Bloom's Taxonomy conceptualized the learner as a creator rather than a consumer of content, Jenkins' white paper on participatory culture conceptualized learning as a collaborative activity rather than an individual activity: "Participatory culture shifts the focus of literacy from one of individual expression to community involvement."<sup>28</sup> Twenty-first century learners not only create content, but they also contribute content to their community. This practice of community membership, creation, and collaboration can be seen as building a participatory culture. Jenkins identifies four types of participatory cultures: "(1) 'Affiliations' or community memberships, (2) 'Expressions' or creative output, (3) 'Collaborative Problem Solving' or team-based development of knowledge, and (4) 'Circulations' or methods for publishing expressions."<sup>29</sup>



In order to build participatory cultures, according to Jenkins, students will need these eleven new media literacies:

1. **Play** — the capacity to experiment with one's surroundings as a form of problem-solving.
2. **Performance** — the ability to adopt alternative identities for the purpose of improvisation and discovery.
3. **Simulation** — the ability to interpret and construct dynamic models of real-world processes.
4. **Appropriation** — the ability to meaningfully sample and remix media content.
5. **Multitasking** — the ability to scan one's environment and shift focus as needed to salient details.
6. **Distributed Cognition** — the ability to interact meaningfully with tools that expand mental capacities.
7. **Collective Intelligence** — the ability to pool knowledge and compare notes with others toward a common goal.
8. **Judgment** — the ability to evaluate the reliability and credibility of different information sources.
9. **Transmedia Navigation** — the ability to follow the flow of stories and information across multiple modalities.
10. **Networking** — the ability to search for, synthesize, and disseminate information.
11. **Negotiation** — the ability to travel across diverse communities, discern and respect multiple perspectives, and grasp and follow alternative norms.<sup>30</sup>

Libraries can tap into existing participatory cultures such as student organizations and participate alongside students in practicing new media literacy skills. As informal learning environments, libraries should be primary testing grounds for new informal ways of learning such as play, transmedia navigation, and networking. Students engaged in Alternate Reality Games on campus are actively involved in a highly participatory culture. The case study of the "Feed Your Brains" zombie game, presented later,

exemplifies the utilization of a variety of new media literacies during a short event.

### Framework for Twenty-first Century Learning

Noted earlier, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills is an organization that strives to build "collaborative partnerships among education, business, community and government leaders."<sup>31</sup> Esteemed members include Adobe, Apple, Cisco Systems, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, and Microsoft. The *Framework for 21st Learning* advocates for a foundation of core subjects with an overarching layer of twenty-first century skills.<sup>32</sup> These skills fall into three categories with additional subclasses:

- **Learning & Innovation Skills**
  - Creativity & Innovation
  - Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
  - Communication & Collaboration
- **Information, Media, and Technology Skills**
  - Information Literacy
  - Media Literacy
  - ICT Literacy
- **Life and Career Skills**
  - Flexibility and Adaptability
  - Initiative and Self-Direction
  - Social and Cross Cultural Skills
  - Productivity and Accountability
  - Leadership and Responsibility

As mentioned above, the core subject in library instruction is "information literacy." Librarians must begin integrating complementary twenty-first century skills into library instruction programs. Library research is often a form of critical thinking and problem solving; therefore librarians should take advantage of this chance to develop non-traditional library instruction. The case study of "Capture the Info Flag" is an example of utilizing several "learning & innovation" skills to reach out to undergraduates.

### Case Studies





*“Mind Mashup:” Peer Teaching Led by a Small Student Group*

**Student Organization:** Students for Free Culture

Students for Free Culture is a small student organization with a mission closely aligned with library values. The group strives "to advance cultural participation, especially in areas of new technology" and "to promote intellectual property policy in the public interest" (<http://uf.freeculture.org>). They are highly tech-savvy students with clear understandings of intellectual property rights and media literacy principles. Furthermore, they are leaders on campus in the use and development of open source software.

**Partnership Formation:** Student-initiated Nationally, the Students for Free Culture organization is working towards an Open University concept. A part of their approach involves promoting open access. The student organization initiated meetings with science librarians to discuss the state of open access on campus and learn how they could help. They agreed to work with librarians to raise visibility about scholarly communication issues and promote the libraries' Open Access Week 2009 events (<http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/oa/2009/index.html>). This included a local, library-sponsored, SPARKY awards contest in which students created video shorts about the value of information sharing (<http://www.uflib.ufl.edu/sparkyawards>).

### Activity Overview

Realizing that many fellow undergraduates did not have expensive software or the media editing knowledge to create videos for the SPARKY awards, members of Students for Free Culture proposed a one night workshop to share open source software programs. Along with a Science & Technology Librarian and the Information Commons Librarian, the students brainstormed open source media creation programs to peer-teach. They selected four software programs: Gimp (image editing), Blender (3-D

animation), Audacity (sound editing), and Inkscape (vector drawing). Alternatives to copyright and media that could be freely reused became integral parts of the session. As free culture advocates, the students passed out creative commons buttons and gave an overview of where students could find multimedia creations that they could mash up into new creative products.

Since it was student-initiated and peer-taught, the two-hour workshop required a relatively low time investment from librarians. Librarians reserved the space, collaborated with students in content planning, worked with the IT department to load the software programs, and requested a refreshment budget from the library PR & Marketing Committee. The Free Culture students selected the open source software programs, found expert peer-teachers, developed session lesson plans, and helped to advertise the events.

### Learning Objectives

Learners attending the “Mind Mashup” workshop will be able to do the following:

1. Select Creative Commons licensed images, movies, and music to reuse, remix, and construct new creative products.
2. Identify Gimp, Blender, Audacity, and Inkscape as high quality open source software programs available for media creation.
3. Recognize the library Information Commons as a place for high-tech learning and play.
4. Create their own multimedia projects using images, video, and sound clips.

### Publicity/Marketing

Advertising came in the form of traditional marketing techniques. The library graphic designer used SPARC's pre-designed, reusable “Mind Mashup” header to create small flyers and posters. The Students for Free Culture passed out flyers on campus and librarians hung up posters in the libraries. Announcements on the library blog and in



the local student paper generated interest in the event. Prior to the event the library held a Technology Showcase in the Information Commons. A high volume of students came, toured the space, and visited booths. This was the perfect opportunity to inform students of the upcoming workshop.

**Outcomes**

On the night of the event, forty-five students came with laptops in hand ready to learn about media creation software. The students spanned a variety of disciplines: journalism, computer science engineering, anthropology, and more. Every seat in the Information Commons presentation area filled up and students were actively engaged in demonstrations of the software programs. Learners enthusiastically thanked the presenters and librarians and asked follow-up questions about creative commons, open access, and open source software. One student wrote a thank-you letter to the dean of libraries, saying the experience was invaluable and the software was a much-needed addition to the Information Commons workstations. Student reporters jumped on the story and published a highly positive review of the workshop (and the library) in the newspaper. Most importantly, a lasting alliance formed between the Students for Free Culture and the libraries. During following semesters, the group has continued to collaborate with librarians to further these shared values.

**21st Century Skills Checklist for “Mind Mashup:”**

<i>The New Bloom’s Taxonomy</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Creating <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Evaluating <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Analyzing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applying <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Understanding <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Remembering
<i>Participatory Culture Skills</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Play <input type="checkbox"/> Performance <input type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Appropriation <input type="checkbox"/> Multitasking

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Distributed Cognition <input type="checkbox"/> Collective Intelligence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judgment <input type="checkbox"/> Transmedia Navigation <input type="checkbox"/> Networking <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiation
<i>Partnership for 21st Century Skills Framework</i>
<b>Learning and Innovation Skills</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Creativity & Innovation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Critical Thinking & Problem Solving <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication & Collaboration <b>Information, Media, &amp; Technology Literacy Skills</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Information Literacy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Media Literacy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information, Communication, & Technology Literacy <b>Life &amp; Career Skills</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flexibility & Adaptability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative & Self-Direction <input type="checkbox"/> Social & Cross-Cultural Skills <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Productivity & Accountability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership & Responsibility

*“Feed Your Brains:” Embedding in a Campus-wide Alternate Reality Game*

**Student Organization:** The alternate reality game, Humans vs. Zombies (HvZ) (<http://humansvszombies.org>) was created in 2005 and is played on more than two hundred college campuses across the United States as well as in several other countries. This game of moderated tag invaded the case-study campus in early 2010 with the first official session in mid-April. The organizers spread the word through cryptic flyers, a zombie flash mob in the main quad on campus, Facebook, YouTube, Google, and Tumblr. The local student group, which was officially recognized as a student organization by student government, had over 1,800 followers on Facebook and just fewer than one thousand registered players.

**Partnership formation:** Librarian-initiated Librarians noticed viral marketing flyers that warned of a campus-wide quarantine. Wanting to participate in campus culture, a group of librarians decided to create a fun and fast-paced information scavenger hunt



to complement HvZ. It was essential to move quickly through the planning process, since the game was slated to begin in eight days. A team of librarians created a Zombie Survival LibGuide (<http://libguides.uflib.ufl.edu/zombie>) and posted it to the HvZ Facebook page. This post created an immediate and unexpected response. The HvZ organizers contacted the Library and invited librarians to design the first official mission – or shared event – within the game.

### Learning Objectives

Upon completing the HvZ library mission, learners will be able to do the following:

1. Access the libraries electronic collections including maps, course reserves, the library catalog, and project starter databases.
2. Recognize that the library is a fun, approachable place.

### Activity Overview

The “Feed Your Brains” mission ran from 5:00-6:30 p.m. on the second day of the campus-wide game and was the first shared experience within the game. Players were not required to attend missions, but the HvZ community was very active. Upon registering, gamers received a mission overview consisting of four basic tasks cleverly disguised as ways of surviving in the event of a zombie outbreak:

1. Locating online maps - Look at historical maps of Haiti and identify a mystical city. Find electronic maps of that city.
2. Using electronic reserves - Create an eres account and add a class, download the reading and provide a citation from within that article.
3. Using a database and locating an electronic article - Search *Web of Science* for a specific article about chemical compounds used to induce zombie trances in Haiti. Report the compound.
4. Using the Catalog - Find a survival handbook in the catalog then “txt” the

call number to a cell phone. Find the book in the stacks and show your cell for certification.

They could progress through the tasks in any order they chose. Once they completed the four tasks, they were directed to the certification checkpoint where they received authorization as “library certified” and a cupcake that looked like a bloody brain.

### Publicity/Marketing

The quick turnaround time required creative marketing techniques including cryptic Zombie masks posted on library doors, small flyers posted alongside the HvZ marketing campaign, and social networking outreach including Facebook and Twitter. The Zombie Survival LibGuide served as an excellent way to market the event and inform users about the library's collections and services as they related to a zombie outbreak. The most effective form of publicity, by far, was working with the established community on the HvZ Facebook page.

### Outcomes

Nearly two-hundred HvZ players attended “Feed Your Brains.” The participants were primarily undergraduates, with juniors composing the largest portion of the population. Players' majors ran the gamut from anthropology to environmental engineering to math to telecommunications. At the certification checkpoint, students were enthusiastic about completing their first mission and appreciated the sweet rewards. Students were exposed to library resources that they would be able to use again and again. In addition, the event was covered by two student reporters which provided buzz for future related events.

### 21st Century Skills Checklist for “Feed Your Brains:”

<i>The New Bloom's Taxonomy</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Creating
<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluating
<input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing





<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applying <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Understanding <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Remembering
<b>Participatory Culture Skills</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Play <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance <input type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multitasking <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Distributed Cognition <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collective Intelligence <input type="checkbox"/> Judgment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transmedia Navigation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Networking <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Negotiation
<b>Partnership for 21st Century Skills Framework</b>
<b>Learning and Innovation Skills</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Creativity & Innovation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Critical Thinking & Problem Solving <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication & Collaboration <b>Information, Media, &amp; Technology Literacy Skills</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Media Literacy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information, Communication, & Technology Literacy <b>Life &amp; Career Skills</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flexibility & Adaptability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative & Self-Direction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social & Cross-Cultural Skills <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Productivity & Accountability <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership & Responsibility

***“Capture the Info Flag”: Partnering with Student Government***

**Student Organization:** Freshmen Leadership Council (FLC)

Student Government (SG) operates with a legislative branch, an executive branch, and a judicial branch. The legislative branch is composed of ninety-four student senators who work on committees and divisions to allocate the university activity fees each year (among many other responsibilities) which amount to more than thirteen million dollars. With this budget SG offers services and programming for the student body in a wide array of student interests. The FLC of SG recruits freshmen to become members of

SG. FLC serves as an avenue for new students to build leadership, collaboration, and communication skills.

**Partnership Formation:** Student-initiated

FLC decided to plan a large recruiting event, social in nature, called “Party in the Plaza.” The primary goal was to promote camaraderie among freshmen while recruiting new members for FLC. They wanted to include an academic experience to commingle scholarship with fellowship. Facing the wide-open, grassy quad is the Humanities & Social Sciences Library. The FLC representatives considered both the Library’s close proximity to the event locale and its dual nature (as a place to study and for meeting one’s friends) as the ideal place for the academic part of Party in the Plaza. The FLC representatives approached the Instruction & Outreach Librarian with the idea of providing a tour or scavenger hunt in the library. The academic experience developed by the librarian became the team-based, interactive “Capture the Info Flag” game.

**Learning Objectives**

At the completion of “Capture the Info Flag,” learners will be able to do the following:

1. Identify important services offered at the library (reference, circulation, instruction, etc.).
2. Recognize the areas and equipment available to them at the library.
3. Understand how to search for and physically locate an item within the library.

**Activity Overview**

“Capture the Info Flag” mixed fun, teamwork, critical thinking, communication, and leadership with information literacy. While envisioning the event, the librarian worked with FLC representatives to determine potential number of participants (which, at the time, was two-hundred and fifty) and an ideal day and time for the event. The event was held in the evening on a Thursday,



from 8:00 to 11:00 p.m. Considering the lengthy duration of the Party in the Plaza, the library event would need to be flexible, to be spread out across the entire building to avoid concentrated areas of congestion as the library was still open for regular business and, finally, to be able to recycle easily throughout the evening.

Party in the Plaza was an open event where students could come at any time during the evening. However, in order to participate in the social events held in the Plaza of the Americas, students first had to complete "Capture the Info Flag" inside the library. SG volunteers and members of FLC were on hand to organize students into teams in the Plaza of the Americas, to explain the rules of the game, and to present each team with a task list bookmark. These tasks involved performing actual examples of common library transactions needed by freshmen and were written in relaxed, 18-year-old-friendly diction to help make the event fun and easy for the freshmen to relate to:

#### *FLC and the Library Present "Capture the Info Flag"*

Directions: Go where the clue leads you. Pick up a flag. Collect four flags and return to the Plaza of the Americas.

1. Booo, you have to write a research paper! Grab your first flag at the desk where you go to get help finding books and articles.
2. Log on to a computer and find the call number for *Great Military Battles* by Cyril Falls. What collection is it in? You'll find your second flag near the book.
3. Well hey! You can go to a library orientation this summer. Your next flag is in the classroom where orientations take place. Hint: the library's home page knows all...
4. "Books...reading...what?! These books smell dusty. Don't you have anything new to read?" Sure we do! Grab your fourth and final flag in the new books area.

A bucket of numbered and color-coded flags were positioned at each task-fulfillment area. The groups were free to take one flag per team per task. When the teams completed the four tasks, they returned to the Plaza of the Americas and presented their flags at the ticket booth to receive their pizza vouchers.

#### **Publicity/Marketing**

Student government funds paid for a DJ and pizza. Library funds paid for supplies for "Capture the Info Flag," including materials and printing to make two hundred flags. The student government created posters and flyers to advertise Party in the Plaza, and much of the marketing occurred online and in the residence halls. The Dean of Students Office's New Student Programs holds events for new students during the beginning of each fall term called "Weeks of Welcome," and Party on the Plaza was listed on this event calendar. Members of FLC dressed up in superhero costumes to perform on-site marketing, which piqued the curiosity of many freshmen. No publicity appeared in the library except for noise warning signs the day of the event.

#### **Outcomes**

More than five hundred students participated in "Capture the Info Flag." This number is unprecedented at the campus libraries for an information literacy event and is counted as a huge success by librarians. Earlier in the day, two FLC event organizers met with the instruction librarian in the library to run through "Capture the Info Flag." These two students were so impressed by the game itself and, importantly, by what *they learned* in the game that they brought the rest of the event organizers to the library an hour later so they could complete the game as well. The run-through also helped the organizers explain the game better to the participants.

Verbal feedback from the library employees who worked at the public service points was encouraging. Students were not afraid to ask

for help or for directions and they were even more determined to solve the tasks when library staff refused to provide them with the answers. The Assistant Dean of Students who was Director of New Student Programs visited the library during the course of the event and provided the instruction librarian with excellent feedback about the multitude of students attracted to the library and how much fun they were having while learning important library skills. The instruction librarian took pictures inside and outside of the library throughout the evening, capturing images of happy students waving their flags, costumed super-heroes interacting with freshmen, and of FLC members proud of their successful event.

**21st Century Skills Checklist for "Capture the Info Flag:"**

<i>The New Bloom's Taxonomy</i>
<input type="checkbox"/> Creating <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluating <input type="checkbox"/> Analyzing <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Applying <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Understanding <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Remembering
<i>Participatory Culture Skills</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Play <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Performance <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Simulation <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multitasking <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Distributed Cognition <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collective Intelligence <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judgment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transmedia Navigation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Networking <input type="checkbox"/> Negotiation
<i>Partnership for 21st Century Skills Framework</i>
<b>Learning and Innovation Skills</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Creativity & Innovation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Critical Thinking & Problem Solving <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Communication & Collaboration <b>Information, Media, &amp; Technology Literacy Skills</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Literacy <input type="checkbox"/> Media Literacy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information, Communication, & Technology Literacy

<b>Life &amp; Career Skills</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Flexibility & Adaptability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initiative & Self-Direction <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Social & Cross-Cultural Skills <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Productivity & Accountability <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Leadership & Responsibility
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**Conclusion**

Librarians must possess collaboration and communication skills in order to remain relevant in the twenty-first century. To augment library instruction, a wide range of collaborative relationships should be used including the traditional Librarian-Learner (reference), Librarian-Faculty, and Librarian-Department (Subject Specialist or Liaison model) partnerships. Newer forms of connections should also be explored, such as the Librarian-Course cooperation used in embedded librarianship and the Librarian-Community mutualism (outreach) commonly used in public libraries. Among the myriad potential collaborations in academic libraries, Librarian-Student Organization Collaborations are an underused but highly valuable form of partnership that enhances library instruction. Developing collaborative experiences with student-led organizations not only increases turnout at events, but also creates opportunities for students to develop twenty-first century skills, practice new media literacies, and attain higher levels of cognitive engagement.

**Endnotes**

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<sup>28</sup> Jenkins, *Confronting the Challenges of Participatory Culture*, 4.

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