Bringing life and engagement back into the classroom

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Bringing life and engagement back into the classroom.
Megan Lotts, Art Librarian, Rutgers the State University of New Jersey

This project began when I realized I was becoming bored in the classroom. I was tired of reading the same old annotated bibliography projects. I wanted to create a more engaging classroom and get away from the podium.

In November of 2011 I attend ACRL Immersion’s Intentional Teaching Track program. Upon returning home from the 4 day intensive program I was inspired by my experience and decided that I would re-vamp my CI 199 1 credit library research course. I knew that I wanted the class to be more dynamic and that I was done taking the lecture off the shelf and putting on the charm. I wanted to have less lecturing and more action and engagement. I wanted my students to have an opportunity to have and share their own voice. I also realized that when we laugh we are having FUN, and when we are having FUN we tend to be more likely to be present and pay attention.

After re-vamping my course, I administered a pre/post test to each student and collected answers to open-ended questions. I was surprised at what the students found most important about what they learned and also what they saw as the positives and negatives of a university research library.

WHAT THE STUDENTS HAD TO SAY...
Most valuable skill learned:
- How to use Morris Library website
- How to use the research databases
- Seeing all the different ways to research
- Learning @ Wikipedia & how to create page
- Learning how to cite materials
- Library chat
- Going to special collections
- How to work with English speakers in groups
- How to find credible information

WHAT THE STUDENTS HAD TO SAY...
Positive aspects of Morris Library:
- Ask a librarian/chat
- Writing center
- Special Collections
- Availability of resourceful information
- Study space/computers/private study rooms
- Café
- Staff nice & always there to help
- Interlibrary loan
- Wireless network

WHAT THE STUDENTS HAD TO SAY...
Negative aspects of Morris Library:
- Can be confusing/intimidating because of size
- Some days too crowded or noisy
- Some areas not open to non students
- To far from my dorm
- Wish it was 24 hours
- Needs more computers
- Hard to get a job at Morris Library
- There are no negative aspects

WHAT I DID...
1. Pre/Post test- where are they when they entered/ended CI 199
2. Watched & discussed the film Digital Nation
3. More in class group Activities...
   a. FIND me activity
   b. SIUcat/i-share activity
   c. EBSCO in class activity
   d. Databases in class activity
   d. APC’s & Primary/Secondary
4. Special Collections Project
5. Annotated Article Project
6. Wikipedia Project