

Developing a Consumer Health Library Orientation and Class for Library Interns and Volunteers

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Objective

To develop a Blackboard course for library interns and volunteers that provides an orientation to the library and consumer health reference services, supplements live instruction, and prepares them for hands-on experience working with library patrons.

Setting/Participants/Resources

The Community Health Education Center (CHEC), a library for patients and their family members to find health information, is located in an urban academic medical center.

Methods

1. Reviewed online consumer health tutorials and the CAPHIS website to identify elements of instruction to include.
2. Discussed instructional needs with current students to find areas where additional training was needed. Key elements were identified:
 - a. Overview of the CHEC library;
 - b. Office orientation, and policies;
 - c. Reference services (reference interview, evaluating websites, using print and online reference resources);
 - d. Library ethics and health literacy.
3. Selected Blackboard as the class shell because enrollees have easy access to Blackboard and are familiar with using the tool.
4. Identified relevant literature to post to the course documents section and posted several assignments and discussion questions to enhance the learning experience.

Results

- Six students have enrolled and completed the Blackboard course.
- Verbal feedback from students has been positive.
- Student feedback suggests that the tutorial has enhanced their understanding and ability to assist users in CHEC.
- Tutorial prepares the students for hands-on experience working with library patrons and supplements the one-on-one instruction given by the librarian.
- Having instructional material in one accessible place promotes uniformity in the instruction given to each student and provides a resource to which they can refer as needed.

Conclusion

The class is a work in progress and additional information is added as needed. For example, the librarian identified a gap in specific consumer health training on answering cancer reference questions and added a cancer reference component.

Contact Us

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Course Description and Learning Outcomes



Healthcare providers have a responsibility to provide patients with understandable information about their health. Research indicates that inadequate knowledge of one's health or disease condition can impact patient compliance and patient-provider communications. At the conclusion of this course, students will be able to:

- Discuss the importance of providing reliable and current health information to patients and community residents.
- Identify and access relevant and reliable consumer health information print and electronic resources like MedlinePlus, MD Consult, Micromedex Care Notes, NORD Database, and Consumer Health Complete.
- Assist center patrons with finding health information on a variety of health topics.
- Gain an understanding of health literacy.
- Identify barriers to learning.

Course Content

The screenshot shows a Blackboard course interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: My Blackboard, Courses, Content System, VCU Libraries, Organization, Downloads & Help, and Scholar. The course title is 'PROVIDING HEALTH INFORMATION TO PATIENTS (LIBR-8002-S-2008SPRING)'. The main content area is titled 'Course Information' and includes sections for 'Course Overview', 'CHEC Orientation', 'Print Resources', 'Electronic Resources', and 'Evaluating Health Information'. The 'Course Overview' section contains text about the course's purpose and goals. The 'Print Resources' section mentions a tour/orientation to print resources at CHEC. The 'Electronic Resources' section mentions covering consumer health websites and subscription databases. The 'Evaluating Health Information' section mentions discussing health literacy and barriers to learning.