

The Amazing Library Race

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CAL POLY LIBRARY SERVICES
ROBERT E. KENNEDY LIBRARY

What is The Amazing Library Race?

- In-class Instructional Game
 - Loosely based on *The Amazing Race*
- Ideal for lower division courses without specific assignment
- Interactive
- Engaging
- Competitive
- Hands-on
- Fun!

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History and Evolution

- Spring 2005
 - Developed by Jennifer Duvernay at Arizona State University for a Freshman Learning Community
- Fall 2010
 - Adapted for BRAE 128 – Careers in Bioresource and Agricultural Engineering course at Cal Poly
- Fall 2011
 - Used College-wide for Introductory and Orientations courses (for In-Library Instruction)
 - 10 different courses

How to Play

- Students work in teams
- Theme or topic for each leg of the race
- Use the library website or a course-specific Research Guide to correctly answer a set of questions about the library and its resources in each leg.
- First team to complete all the legs of the race wins

Active Learning

- Minimal Instruction – Students Jump Right In!
- *Learn by Doing*
 - Cal Poly’s Teaching and Learning Philosophy
- So...

Let’s Play!

Teams

- Get into teams of 4-5 people.
- Create a name for your team.
- Select a Team Captain

The Race

- There are 3 legs of the race.
 - Each leg has 3 questions.
- Use the Woodbury University Library Website (<http://library.woodbury.edu/>) to find the answers to the questions.
- Each team member must correctly answer all the questions before you can move on to the next leg.
 - Team Captain will bring all team members' answer sheets to the instructor for review
- The first team to complete all 3 legs WINS!

And the winner is...

The Method to the Madness

Teams

- Size
 - Teams should be equal in size
 - 2-4 students/team
 - Teams can be assigned or self-forming
 - Difficult to manage more than 8 teams
 - Adjust team size according to class size
- Team Name
 - Students must select a name for their team
 - Team name and student name on all documents
- Team Captain
 - Students must select a captain for their team
 - Team Captain reports for the team
 - Minimizes traffic at the instructor workstation

Goals & Learning Outcomes

- The Race can be tailored to the course to meet specific goals and learning outcomes
- At Cal Poly
 - Goals
 - Dip their toes into the “Library Ocean”
 - Plant the seeds for future learning in subsequent courses
 - Tackle the common pitfalls early on (e.g., citations)
 - What do I want the students to learn?
 - Intro/Orientation Courses (Bloom’s Level 1 – Understand)
 - Popular and common resources and services
 - Library catalogs
 - Discipline specific article databases
 - Citation types and components

Legs of the Race

- Recommend 4-6 legs
 - Number depends on the amount of time you have in class
 - Number of questions in each leg can also vary
 - Each leg should address a topic or concept based on your learning outcomes
 - Each leg is color-coded with colored paper for clarity
- Envelopes for each leg
 - Contain sheets of paper with questions
- At Cal Poly
 - About the Library
 - Articles, citations, and plagiarism
 - Books
 - Articles
 - Citations

Questions

- Number can vary from 2 to 10
 - Again, this depends on the amount of time you have (e.g., 50-minute one-shot, 3-hour lab)
- Questions can be general or discipline-specific – you decide!
- Questions should require students to use a resource to find information
 - Point students to library website or research guide
- Questions should be “SMART”
 - Specific – Aligned with goals and learning outcomes
 - Measurable – Easily assessed and verified
 - Attainable – Easily answered
 - Realistic – Actual tasks/situations they may encounter
 - Timely – Important and relevant

Examples & Research Guide

- **About the Library**
 - Where is the Research Help Desk located?
 - What are course reserves?
- **Articles, citations, and plagiarism**
 - List the 3 types of articles and the audience for each type.
 - What is Cal Poly's definition of plagiarism?
- **Books**
 - On which floor is [*specific book*] located?
- **Articles**
 - List two databases you could use to find articles on topics related to your major.
 - Create a search statement to find articles on [*specific topic*]. Use this to search [*specific database*] and list the title of a relevant article you find.
- **Citations**
 - Is the following citation for a book or an article?
 - Identify the [*journal title, article title, volume, issue*] in the following citation.

Answers

- All members of the team must answer the questions correctly and consistently
 - No slackers – everyone participates
 - Relatively low incidence of copying – teams self police
- Answer sheet options
 - Questions with blank spaces for answers
 - Suitable for shorter races with fewer questions
 - Separate answer sheet
 - Answers only
 - Allows question sheets to be reused
 - Good for multiple sections
 - On their own paper, too
- Prepare an answer sheet ahead of time
 - Be prepared to grade quickly and fairly

Prizes

- Small prizes for each member of the winning team
 - Increases motivation, engagement and competition
 - Disclose prizes...or not
 - Single prize or multi-level prizes (1st, 2nd, 3rd)
 - Examples
 - Promotional materials
 - Candy
 - Trophies or medals! 😊

Preparation

- Goals & Learning Outcomes
 - Use these to shape the content of the Race
- Website/Research Guide
 - Make sure questions can be answered using one of these
- Legs/Questions
 - Prepare questions
 - Place question sheets in envelopes for each leg
- Worksheets
 - Prepare separate worksheet for answers if desired
- Answers
 - Make sure you have the correct answers to the questions on an answer key for quick and efficient grading
- Prizes
 - Determine accordingly

Advantages

- Students become engaged in the activity
- Hands-on experience with the library and its resources
- Lays a foundation for future information literacy instruction in subsequent courses
- Can be tailored to the discipline and to specific goals and learning outcomes
- It's fun!

Disadvantages

- Extensive initial preparation
 - Questions
 - Envelopes
 - Research Guide
- Frenzy of activity during the class
 - Questions from students
 - Grading answers
- Level 1 learning

Questions and/or comments?

Would this work for you?

- With your team, discuss and share...
 - Do you see yourself using this activity at your institution?
 - Why or why not?
 - Which courses?
 - What might be your goals and/or learning outcomes?