

**Strap:** Education

**Heading:** Quick and dirty does the job

**Introduction:** James Cook University librarians worked virtually to provide information literacy (IL) support for a postgraduate class in public health taught entirely online to health and medical professionals. BRONWEN FORSTER and JANET CATTERALL describe how a simple and straightforward approach can help achieve positive results under pressure.

**Body:** With the switch to online learning during COVID-19 restrictions, the lecturer urgently needed videos to support searching databases for quality literature for students' written assessments. To meet this demand, we created short video recordings featuring a conversation between two librarians who explained skills before demonstrating them live.

This series of five- to ten-minute videos, recorded using Zoom, employed a question-and-answer style to demonstrate how to develop and use search strategies with relevant databases. Four 'breaking down the topic' videos and seven 'live searching' videos were recorded with Zoom's whiteboard and screen-sharing features.

For our topic-based videos, we prepared a rough outline to guide presenter interaction. The conversation was briefly rehearsed: who would say what, who would contribute to the whiteboard and when, and so on. A single practice run completed the preparation, and the recording was made in a single take. From developing the script to recording, it took less than 30 minutes for each video.

Each topic was analysed through a thought process of question-and-answer ["brainstorming between the presenters"](#). Each video began with a 'hello' from each librarian and presentation of the topic followed by a breakdown on the whiteboard. Search strategies followed, including opportunities to demonstrate phrase searching, truncation and nesting of similar terms.

Videos describing databases similarly emphasized the decision making behind searching, and the live navigation of the interface. The [conversation between the librarians](#) proved highly effective in bringing out this dimension.

Feedback from students and staff was extremely positive. Usage statistics showed students clicked on the eleven videos an average of eight times each. One student said she felt like she was in a live tutorial and part of the conversation. She would pause the video, apply the skills to her own search, then play the video, continuing in that manner until her task was completed. Markers indicated higher quality sources were cited by students than in previous years, with nearly all students including their search strategies in their final report. Having a supportive and enthusiastic lecturer who gave us complete access to the students was, of course, fundamental.

The videos allowed maximum reach to students at point of need, with modest librarian time needed. They were not highly polished or finely edited. However, students commended the conversational style and spontaneous live searching, indicating that the 'quick and dirty' nature of the videos was irrelevant. A small investment of time significantly improved student IL ability and results. In this case, less was so much more.

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Image details

Image file name: IL using zoom JC BF.jpg

Caption: Screen shot of breaking down a topic utilizing the Zoom whiteboard.

People: Bronwen Forster and Janet Catterall. Used with permission

Image file name: Video usage JC BF.jpg

Caption: Chart showing the number of views for each video. Usage statistics obtained from the learning management system.