

Teaching Public Health Informatics

The 5-Year Experience

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Background

- SRPH 640, Public Health Informatics
 - 3 credit hours, letter grade
- Initially required, later elective
- NLM Partners Grant curriculum (1998 – 2000)
- First taught fall 1999
 - Subsequent offerings
 - Summer semesters, 2000 – 2002
 - Spring semester 2003 (mostly via WebCT)
- 50 students have completed the course

Guiding Principles

- Student-centered
 - Participation 20 - 30% of grade
 - Self-directed exercises
 - In-class/web-based discussion
 - Choice of project topics
- Value to future career
 - Combination of skills and concepts
- Scalability

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Course Content

- Overview of public health informatics
- Relevant bibliographic databases
- Locating government information
- SRPH Information System (SRPHIS)
- Communicating with the media

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Course Content

- Citation management software
- Information ethics
- Evaluation of web information
- Presentation skills

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Changes 2002 - 2003

- Textbook (O'Carroll et al.)
- Exercises using PDAs
 - PDAs loaned to 2003 class
- Critical appraisal of public health research
 - Select article about intervention of interest
 - Follow explicit guidelines
 - Relate to local practice (rural Texas)

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Course Technology

2000	Experiments with AOL Instant Messenger
2001-2003	Increasing delivery via WebCT Distance education students in 3 cities TTVN (Trans-Texas Videoconference Network) PDA Loans (Handspring Visor Pro)

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SRPH 640: Public Health Informatics

Select a topic to see its messages:

Compare Discussion Messages

Search Topic 543 topics

Topic	Unread	Total	Status
All	303	325	
Meta	52	52	public, unlocked
Home	0	0	public, unlocked
Chapter 1 Overview	14	17	public, unlocked
Chapter 10	18	21	public, unlocked
Chapter 2 Overview	23	23	public, unlocked
Chapter 3 Overview	27	27	public, unlocked
Chapter 4 Overview	22	22	public, unlocked
Chapter 5 Overview	12	14	public, unlocked
Chapter 6 Overview	0	0	public, unlocked
Chapter 7 Overview	0	0	public, unlocked
Chapter 8 Overview	27	27	public, unlocked
Chapter 9 Overview	60	63	public, unlocked
Chapter 11 Overview	15	18	public, unlocked
Chapter 12 Overview	18	22	public, unlocked
Chapter 13 Overview	20	20	public, unlocked

Evaluation

- Mid-course evaluations
- Formal TAMU evaluations
 - 11 Likert scale questions
 - 1 = disagreement, 5 = agreement
 - Open-ended questions
 - What did you like best?
 - What did you like least?
 - What would improve the course?

Evaluation

- For all questions, all years, average >4.0
- Written comments
 - “Make this class mandatory”
 - “Instructors were fantastic”
- Critical comments
 - “4-hour block of time”
 - Specific assignments

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Evaluation

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Most appreciated | • Least popular |
| – Searching skills | – GIS (frustrating) |
| – Systematically appraising research | – Legislative information |
| – In-person contact | |
| – PDA exercises | |

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Lessons Learned

- Coordinate online and in-person content
- Promote public health and libraries outside their respective fields
- Involve colleagues
- Refine exercises annually
- Create a backup
- Dedicate personnel time

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