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Gamified Library Instruction and Predatory Publishing: Connecting Undergraduate Nursing Students with Trends in Scholarly Communication

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Predatory publishing and libraries

Predatory publishing, or the exploitation of open access publishing models, represents a high-impact, proliferate concern in academia. Popular and scholarly news articles abound citing numerous case studies of authors being deceived by these publications, sometimes to the major detriment of the author's reputation. Following the model established by Jeffrey Beall, instruction and evaluation of predatory publishers is a natural extension of librarian engagement in scholarly communications outreach, both to researchers and to students encountering this "false academy."¹ Deemed an "emerging threat to medical literature," articles from predatory journals appear in all disciplines, where librarians can serve as the vital connection between authors and untangling the webs of predatory and other low-quality publishing schemes.²

Why undergraduate nursing students?

Evaluation of resources is a significant focus in library instruction, particular in clinical health sciences subject instruction. While many authors are becoming more aware of predatory publishers, students are encountering these articles with little background knowledge. Professional nursing publications in particular have advocated for nurses to maintain awareness of this issue.^{3,4} As in many disciplines, predatory publishing is rampant in nursing with 140 nursing-specific predatory journals identified in 2016 – a number expected to grow yearly.⁵ By integrating predatory publishing evaluation into existing library instruction class sessions, librarians are helping nursing undergraduates better prepare for both their coursework and their potential careers as nurse researchers.

Gamification vs Game-based?

Gamified and game-based active learning exercises in library instruction can be used to increase student retention and engagement, making these exercises a natural fit for an up-and-coming topic that students may not have encountered before. Notably, gamified and game-based exercises do not necessitate a digital platform (but certainly can!) so that even librarians without software programming skills can utilize these exercises.

The exercises developed here utilize a combination of gamified and game-based techniques⁶, the differences between which can be summarized by the following characteristics:

- Gamified:** Game mechanics used in a non-game environment, can be long-term integrated into course
- Game-based:** Learning comes from playing the game, can be completed in one session

Perfect Match Game Show

5 minutes

Requires: Quick-talk on evaluation criteria, computer, projector, flyers with YES/NO icons

- Much like in an old-school dating game show, students are presented with a series of candidates for their "perfect match" article
- Using the quick evaluation criteria discussed in class (and potentially printed on their handouts), students are presented with one article at a time and given 30 SECONDS to evaluate
- At time, students must hold up their YES/NO decision on the article
- Students are given 30 SECONDS to share their reasoning
- Exercise is repeated for 5 articles

Learning outcome:
Students will be able to practice quick evaluation techniques to identify the difference between predatory and non-predatory articles



Guess Who DIY Publisher Quiz

10 minutes

Requires: Quick-talk on publishing models, computer, projector, Poll Everywhere account, personal laptops, prizes

- Using the PollEverywhere "Competitions" tool, students answer a set of questions relating to a fictional publisher created by the instructor
- Students are told if the publisher is a traditional, open access, or predatory, and have 1 MINUTE per question to research and answer
- Questions include "Do authors pay a fee to submit to me?" "Will I publish your article in less than a month?" "Are there articles published in this title in print in the library?"
- Scores are kept by PE, and the top leaderboard wins a prize.
- For a bonus prize, students complete an assessment sheet

Learning outcome:
Students will be able to identify elements of predatory and non-predatory articles and publishers



Assessment

Each predatory publishing exercise can be assessed using direct formative pre- and post-assessment activities. Assessment techniques used in the initial run of these exercises include:

- Pre- and post-session knowledge check (same questions/answers)
- 60 second paper on the importance of evaluating articles
- Quick scavenger hunt to find a predatory article and a quality article, with a reflection question on the handout on challenges of both searches
- Reflection digital poll on the most useful thing learned, and what they wish we had spent longer exploring

As an informal observation, the exercises included on this poster were most successful in their pilot run when the pace was upbeat, the mood was informal, and students were able to incorporate their own research interests into the games.

Publishing Family Feud

15+ minutes

Requires: Computer, projector, digital Family Feud PowerPoint, teams

- Every 2 teams are given the same topic and are given 5 MINUTES to research using library resources
- Topics may include parts of a journal article, library databases, differences in OA/traditional, markers of predatory journals, etc.
- Each set of two teams face off in a game of Publishing Family Feud, with the goal of coming up with the top 5-10 ways their topic can be identified
- Unlike traditional Family Feud, the results are not ranked/scored, and the teams take turns giving their responses (no buzzers necessary)
- Key points on each topic are shared by the librarian as answers are revealed

Learning outcome:
Students will be able to compare the elements of the predatory publishing process to that of traditional/OA publishing in the context of other subject instruction



Treasure Quest

20+ minutes

Requires: Intro lecture on scholarly publishing, handouts, stations, personal computers, tokens, prizes

- Students travel around the room to various treasure locations, in any order but with an overall time limit of 20 MINUTES.
- At each station, the student must successfully answer a set of questions on their handout, using library resources to inform answers and using searches/examples from their personal research topic.
- Each treasure stop has a theme: OA, predatory publishing, evaluating sources, markers of a quality article, etc.
- A complete set of tokens equals a treasure reward (candy!).

Learning outcome:
Students will be able to assess different publishing models and types of articles for inclusion in their research



Future Research

For the initial development and pilot run of these exercises, each individual game was used as part of a 45-60 minute long one-shot library instruction session in undergraduate nursing courses of varying course levels.

Going forward, the authors would like to use these games in different classes of the same course, using a uniform assessment strategy to evaluate the efficacy of the games in meeting learning objectives and facilitating student engagement in nursing subject instruction.

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