Detecting Information Literacy: Choose Your Own Adventure Video Series

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David Snyder is a graduate student at the University of Iowa currently pursuing a MA in Library and Information Science. He holds a Bachelors Degree in Biology from Iowa State University. Currently, David works at the Lichtenberger Engineering Library as a graduate worker where he assists in the creation of the Detecting Information Literacy series as well as other videos. After graduation, David hopes to work in a science library where he can put his undergraduate and graduate skills to work together.

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Abstract

Finding interesting approaches to teach the concepts of information literacy is a problem that many face in library instruction. The Lichtenberger Engineering Library at the University of Iowa has been working to create a fun and engaging way through an online video series that walks students through different parts of information literacy while allowing the students to choose their own path.

Using the concept of the *Choose Your Own Adventure* books published by Bantam Books and the *They Made Me Do Research* series by the University of Northern Colorado, the Lichtenberger Engineering Library has set out to create a video series that will help students explore various topics of information literacy. Each series of videos, called a module, teaches one topic of information literacy. The first module – which has been completed – focuses on evaluating information using the CRAAP Test. The second module, which is under development, will focus on setting up search strategies.

A module will consist of 18 to 20 videos, each less than 2 minutes in length. Each video will end with a question and require the viewer to choose from several video options. Each option takes the storyline in a different direction. The video series is no longer passive learning – by requiring the viewer to evaluate each scene and the potential outcomes, it becomes active engagement and learning.

These videos will be embedded in various seminars and classes throughout the College of Engineering. They are created to help in both classroom instruction and as stand-alone learning tools. Completion of a module will award the student a digital badge that can be linked directly to an online course management system, allowing instructors to see who has completed the assignment.

By completing a video series, or module, the student will have created their own adventure while learning different aspects of information literacy in a fun and engaging way.

Background

Gamifying information literacy is not a new concept. There is a plethora of articles illustrating how various libraries have embraced this concept. Gamifying follows basic concepts of assigning tasks and engaging users. Each game also provides immediate feedback to the user by using interactive learning techniques.

The University of Toronto created a hands-on approach to gamify their library orientation tutorial by creating a series of tasks and stamps as a reward for completing each step (Spence). The project was great for allowing students to choose their own path for answering the questions

and giving awards (stamps) once each task was complete. One issue with this model is it requires all the students and several libraries to be together at the same space and time.

Other gamifying projects have been done in a more asynchronous video game format, such as video games created at Rowan University for their freshman engineering clinics (Gulotta). These video games use a scaffolding model, which means the challenges become harder as they move through the program, and allow the users to experience points, badges, leaderboards, and achievements. It is all accomplished without the need to have the students and librarians gather at the same place and time.

Librarians at the University of Iowa wanted to do something in-between these two ideas. A series, which can be used in both asynchronous as well as in flipped classrooms settings. There was also a need to break a few concepts in information literacy into pieces that could be viewed separately at point-of-need or as a whole. The goal is to make this a versatile game so it could be used in a variety of settings.

Using the model of the *Choose Your Own Adventure* books published by Bantam Books and the *They Made Me Do Research* series by the University of Northern Colorado, the Lichtenberger Engineering Library has set out to create similar learning modules using videos. Each video series will tell a story that has multiple outcomes and story lines (Cuthbertson). Individuals will watch video clips that are less than two minutes, and, at the end of each, choose the next path the story will take. Upon completion of the video module, the viewer will have learned one aspect of information literacy. These videos will allow the students to engage in the learning process and explain the concepts in a unique fashion.

Previously, the librarian taught a sophomore seminar class examining how to evaluate information using the CRAAP test. Teaching required the librarian to stand in front of the class and use a PowerPoint presentation to explain each of the aspects of information literacy – currency, relevancy, authority, accuracy, and purpose.

Using the new video module, each student becomes a rookie investigator trying to discover why there was an explosion in a lab. While they are investigating the explosion, they will learn about each of the concepts of the CRAAP test. Having the students complete the video module prior to class frees the librarian to work with the students with exercises and activities that tie the concepts to real-world experiences. The first video series created focuses on the concepts of evaluating information and setting up search strategies.

Methods

Each module is composed of a series of videos that walk the viewer through a storyline. Each video concentrates on one of the information literacy aspects. The first step in the creation process consisted of mapping out the plot for the stories, ensuring all relevant information was included, and adding possible detours and outcomes.

The first module, Evaluating Information, features a series of 20 videos that moves the viewer through the process of the CRAAP test. The module includes five possible detours and two possible outcomes. The CRAAP test involves students evaluating information and resources by looking at the information's currency, relevancy, authority, accuracy, and purpose. In the story, the viewer becomes a rookie detective tasked with helping "Detective Jones" investigate a scientist and an explosion in his lab. (See Figure 1)

The second module focuses on setting up search strategies. This includes discovering keywords, researching synonyms, and using Boolean operators. This module features 18 videos with three detours and six possible outcomes. The storyline involves the rookie detective and Detective Jones helping a disoriented pirate find his lost items. (See Figure 2)

Once the stories were mapped out, the videos were created using cartoon creation software called GoAnimate. (See Figure 3) This software allowed the library to create and duplicate scenes to ensure continuity throughout the modules. Once the videos were made, the librarian, student employees, and other volunteers recorded their voices using Audacity. These recordings were uploaded into GoAnimate and synced with the characters. Each video concludes with a screen that runs for 12 seconds and contains links and embedded video listings for each choice the student can make to continue the story.

Next, the videos were uploaded onto YouTube and all crosslinking and embedding was completed to ensure students could easily link from one video to the other and follow the storyline. Closed captioning was manually added once the videos were uploaded on YouTube. (See Example 4)

The final step in creating the video modules was to set up the badging system. If the student reached the desired outcome at the end of the module, a link takes the student to a short quiz. Upon completion of the quiz, the student receives a digital badge. These badges were created using an API and Badgr. These badges can then be uploaded into a Canvas page where faculty can easily check who has completed each module.

Conclusions

The first module was completed in March 2018. These videos are currently being reviewed by outside individuals and have been well received. The librarians hope to roll out the video series for Fall 2018 classes. YouTube analytics will be used to track the number of views for each video and gain information about usage and how long into the series people watch. In the future, this series will be expanded to look at all parts of information literacy, from creating citations, choosing a research topic, and learning about copyright and intellectual properties.

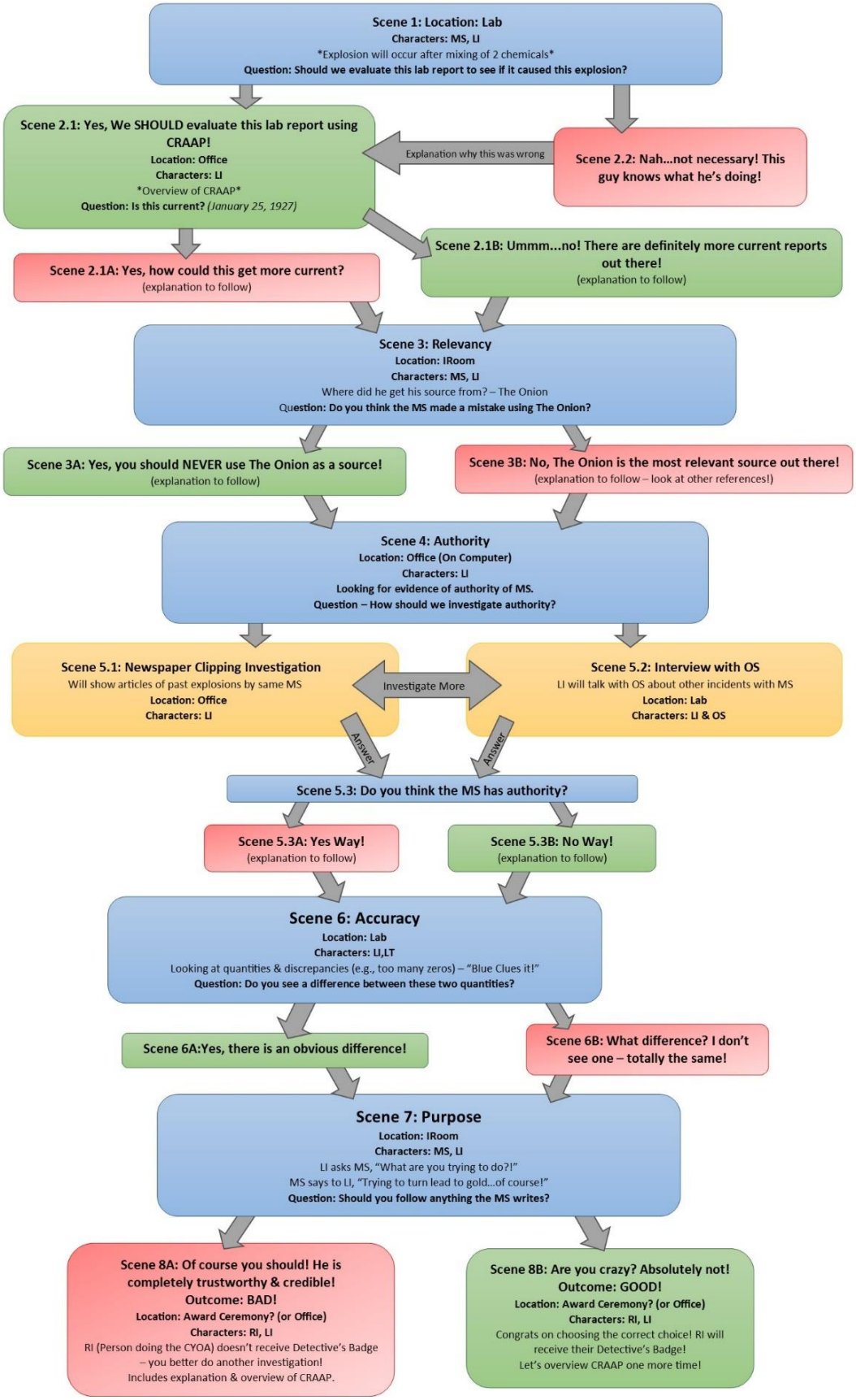

Figure 1: Storyboard for Evaluating Information Module

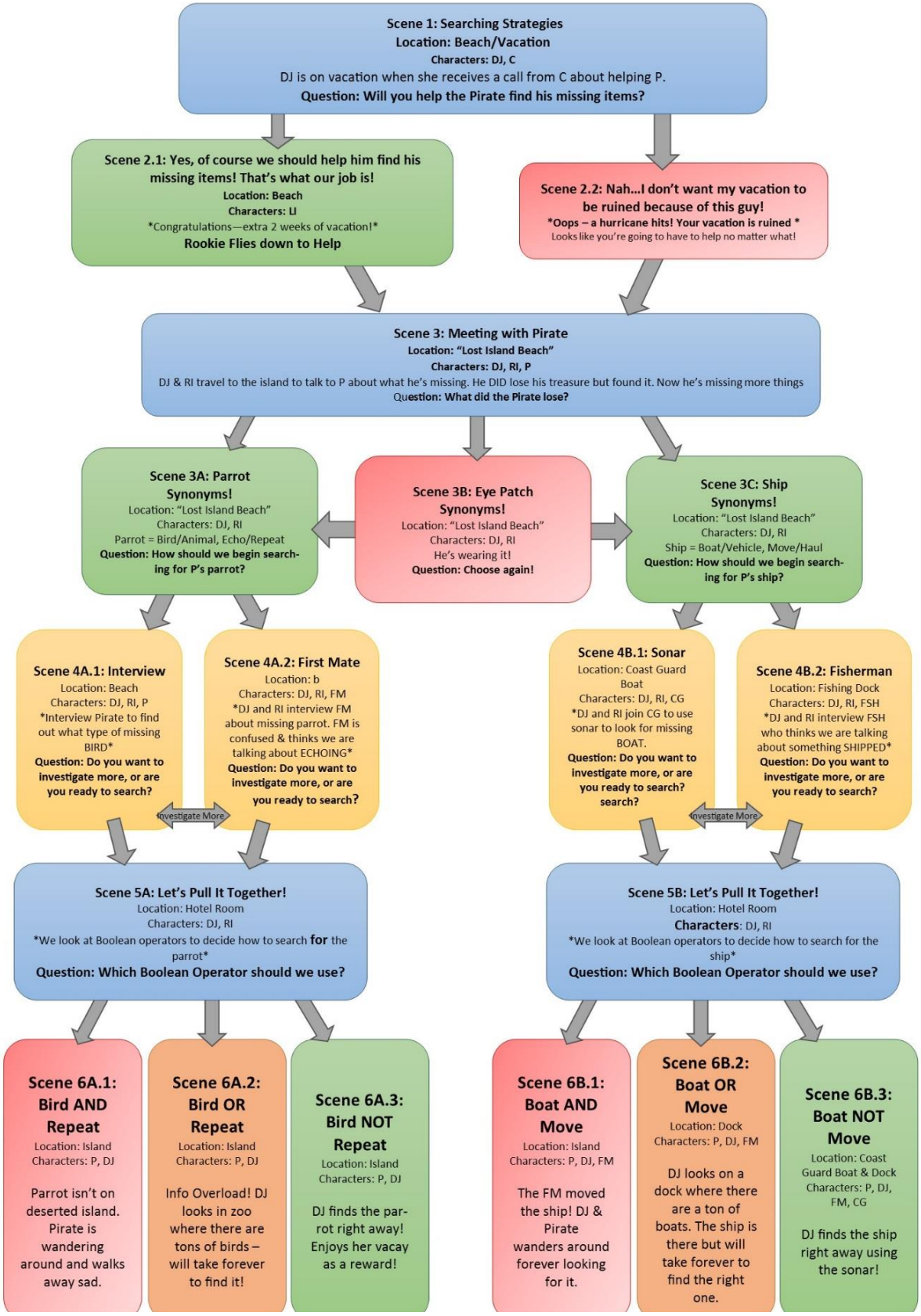

Figure 2: Storyboard for Search Strategies Module

Figure 3: Example of the Opening Scene

Figure 4: Example of the Choice Boxes in the Closing Credits of the First Video

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