

Teaching Tip: Course Packs Made Easy

Are you a teacher who prefers to use course packs? If so, would you like to improve the contents or add to them? Here are some recommendations to make this process a little easier.

Selecting the Readings

The first step in the building process is to determine what you want your students to read. A good document to consult before deciding is your course outline, or more specifically your course's learning outcomes. This approach matches the [backward course design](#) process. Once you determine the type of readings you want to include, you will be able to align your teaching, learning activities, and assessments with a great course pack.



Image courtesy of [Boians Cho Joo Young](#) / Freedigitalphotos.net

Consult the Librarians

Before you begin to gather all your material, it is highly recommended that you meet with the librarian who is your department's liaison. Librarians can help you find books, articles, images, and multimedia to support your teaching. They can also show you how to create a bibliography quickly, and guide you through any copyright challenges you may experience.

Searching the Library Databases

Included in the Library's budget are subscriptions to databases. These databases provide teachers, students, and staff access to thousands of credible and scholarly resources for college-level research. Using these sources for teaching your courses will help students succeed here at Vanier, as well as in university (universities subscribe to the same databases, as well as many more). Databases can be accessed at the College or from home (log in with your e-mail or Omnivox username and password from the Library's Web page). Below are some database companies that provide us with excellent resources:

- [EBSCO](#) Vanier subscribes to several EBSCO databases to access articles and journals from a wide variety of academic disciplines and sources. It is possible to search each individual database, or search all of them at the same time. EBSCO also allows you to create folders and store articles for future consultation
- [JSTOR](#) is a humanities database with access to older academic journals and books, as well as new ones.
- [Gale](#) Vanier subscribes to three databases from this company. Virtual Reference Library is a collection of subject-specific reference books and handbooks, searchable either by each book, or all at the same time. Opposing Viewpoints and Global Issues create "packages" of information about contemporary topics. There is an option to annotate and highlight your selected readings. These databases provide access to audio files and articles can be downloaded into MP3s.

- [ScienceDirect \(Elsevier\)](#) is a highly scientific resource for all disciplines, including the humanities and social sciences. Books are available by chapters for easy searching, and links to other articles in the bibliographies are often included in ScienceDirect.

Getting the Resources to your Students

Most of the databases provide a way to share information with your students. Some offer permalinks that you must share through a secure network, like OmnivoX or your Moodle course. Another way to assign readings is to print them out and place them in a course pack. If you want your students to read a book, ask the librarians to purchase it and then place it on Reserve. This information will be reported to Copibec and the publishers and authors will be paid to comply with copyright laws.

You could also place the citation of the article you want your students to read in your course outline, show them how to go on to the appropriate database to search for the article and then ask them to read it. This will teach your students how to use the databases and help them to become more information literate. They will learn a research skill that will be valuable throughout their studies and beyond. Many students prefer to access their readings on a computer, tablet, or smartphone, and some of these resources allow for this method of learning.

For strategies you can use to encourage students to **read** your course pack, please consult the Teaching Tips Getting Students to Read (Effectively) [Part I](#) and [Part II](#).

For more information on course packs, reading, and learning, [contact us at the PDO!](#)

Source:

Bissonnette, Susan. "Creating Great Course Packs." Vanier College. Montreal. 16 Apr. 2015. Workshop.