

Note: Konnie on page 9 of this document I have a note about the assignment.

John Scheeler, library media specialist at Minot Magic City, Jane LaPlante, information literacy librarian at Minot State University, and I met at the university on Nov. 4. Jane shared with us a paper entitled “An Academic Librarian’s Thoughts on the Research Skills and Attitudes on Incoming Freshmen.” The following summarizes her observations:

She sees students coming in with these attitudes:

- I have nothing to learn- I already know it all.
- If searching is at all sophisticated, I am not going to bother to learn it.
- Whatever I find is good enough.
- I just need articles to put in my bibliography; I’m not actually going to use them for anything.

She wishes students would arrive with:

- An openness to learning about how to find college-level information.
- An understanding that as they grow and mature, the information they seek needs to become more sophisticated as will their search methods.
- A belief that librarians are experts in information seeking.

Jane opened with the question about why so many students rely on a computer for information. We commented that many rural schools lack a library of usable nonfiction books for student research; therefore, students are used to using the Internet for information rather than using more books or periodicals.

We three discussed the behaviors and attitudes of students and found that high school students were not that much different from college students. I observed that incoming freshmen lack any training in finding reliable information and rely on the Internet. Students prefer Googling and rarely use books for research. As part of our

ninth and tenth grade curriculum I teach the use of databases and the evaluation of websites. At Magic City Campus the skills I introduced are reinforced with the addition of subject searching training. However, unless the instructor specifically requires a book or database, students tend not to use them. I discovered one reason why this fall. I helped a student find a couple books for her research paper, but she told me that she didn't have time to read the books. Now I realize why students don't use books; they think they have to read the entire book. I have taught how to use the online catalog to find the book, but I haven't taught how to use the book for research purposes. At Magic City Campus the skills I introduced are reinforced with the addition of subject searching training.

One weakness we can address better at the high school level is distinguishing between the different levels of sophistication in various types of publications, i.e. magazines, academic journals, books, etc. Instead of merely telling students the difference, I need to provide examples of them to pass around a class. Students need to see the difference between *Newsweek* and *CyberPsychology, Behavior & Social Networking* and the difference between the *Minot Daily News* and *The Wall Street Journal* and the difference between a book written for high school research, such as ReferencePoint Press Compact Research series with its abundant use of white space and color text, graphs, and charts and an academic book with dense text and no color. Online all sources look the same and tend to be equal in students' minds.

Another weakness I can address is the citation and its separate parts. When I teach the databases, I point out how to access the citation. However, students are not able to tell what the parts of a citation are. One activity I have team taught with a language arts instructor is having students write citations for books and magazines. The teacher instructs them on the parts of a citation, I teach them where to find these in a book and magazine, and then I provide a variety of books and magazines for students to cite. The teacher and I correct the citations as the students finish them so they get immediate feedback. When these students then access the online citations, they understand the parts of the citation. Students without this lesson do not have a good grasp of what a citation is.

Another weakness students show is the inability to narrow down a topic, which hinders their ability to find effective information.

The three of us met again on Thursday, Nov. 10, at Central Campus. At our previous meeting we determined a need for differentiating different types of sources and the parts of a citation. From that point we discussed the need for students to think critically about information since all information appears equal to them. What discrete skills and knowledge do students need to know to evaluate the quality of a source? Much of the vocabulary we use in evaluating websites can also be used for evaluating other types of information. We decided that the most effective assessment method would be for students to use a rubric in all subject areas throughout the four years of high school to give them the needed consistency, vocabulary and repetition to develop the skill of evaluating the quality of a source. Teachers would also have a rubric to evaluate the student evaluation. The other assessment question we decided on was using database tools to explore subject searching as a means to find different terminology to use for searching and as a means to help focus topics.

Previously, John and I had collaborated on using consistent vocabulary in our teaching of evaluating Google websites; therefore, the students' rubric should use the same terminology. Below is the rubric that students would use to evaluate sources they use for school assignments. Before students are asked to use the rubric, we will model the use of the rubric with online and book sources and teach students how to use the rubrics. John and I can begin this immediately if we get teachers to collaborate with us. To implement this rubric school wide would require training the staff on evaluating sources and student evaluations. That would take much more time, but we could perhaps begin next fall. Ideally, we would then ask middle schools to begin implementing a scaled down version of this rubric.

The three of us discovered that we have many of the same concerns with students. Their information seeking skills are weak, and they do not know enough to understand their own shortcomings. Students tend to find

information that is good enough instead of evaluating the information. Also, they have misconceptions about books used for research and about online information. All information online is not equal. I believe that by instituting the following rubric consistently, students will be more adept at evaluating information.

I discovered this fall when teaching and helping students that I need to listen and observe students more to understand their information seeking behavior. That is how I discovered one student who thought she had to read the entire nonfiction book for research. I know she is not alone with this notion. Also, by asking what words they are using when they do searches, I am better able to understand why they can't find information. By teaching them the tools in databases to help with terminology, they may get better results in their searches. We need to understand how students search and work in order to help them.

Below are the two assessment questions we developed. The first is a rubric for students to use to evaluate a source. Following that is the teacher's rubric to evaluate the student. The second assessment relates to the students' ability to use database tools to help with terminology. The second assessment would require updating as the terms in the databases change.

Student Source Evaluation Rubric

	4	3	2	1
<p>Authority author/publisher</p> <p>How do you know if the information is accurate? What makes the author an expert on this topic? Is the source published by a reputable publisher or organization?</p>	Author's name & credentials are provided, can be verified, and demonstrate probable expertise on topic. Author is reputable.	The author gives contact information and/or qualifications. The author may not be an expert on this topic but is clearly knowledgeable about it.	The author is named, but credentials cannot be verified.	It is unclear who wrote this information and/or no credentials are given.
<p>Bias/Purpose</p> <p>Why was this information published? Does the source contain any bias and/or present only one viewpoint? If the source contains opinions, are they based on facts or emotions?</p>	The source examines both sides of the issue fairly and/or is primarily fact-based.	Although the source has a biased opinion, it is thoughtful and well-researched.	The purpose of the source is to sell something or to promote an idea for personal or economic gain.	The source expresses an extreme position based entirely on emotion.
<p>Content/Sources</p> <p>Is the information in the source cited?</p>	There is an extensive list of sources or hyperlinks that lead to credible information.	There is a limited source list and/or hyperlinks or the work is original research by a reputable source.	Sources of information are mentioned, but a source list or hyperlinks are not included.	There is no indication of where the information came from.
<p>Content/Date</p> <p>How current is the information?</p>	The source is less than 3-years-old and is a current source of its type on the topic.	The information is older but is not necessarily out-of-date.	The information is clearly out-of-date for the topic.	There is no indication when the information was published.

Source Analysis Using the criteria from the rubric explain in two to four sentences why this source would or would not be a valuable source for your research.

Teacher Source Evaluation Rubric

- 4 The source analysis is accurate, complete, and precisely explained.
- 3 The source analysis is accurate, complete, and explained.
- 2 The source analysis may contain some inaccuracy, is incomplete, or is vaguely explained.
- 1 The source analysis fails to accurately identify noteworthy strengths and weaknesses.

Assessment Questions to demonstrate use of database tools as a means to explore topics and terminology.

1. In *eLibrary* do a basic search for **poverty**. Which of the following terms are in the *Why Don't You Try* suggestions?

- a. poverty statistics
- b. ending poverty
- c. poverty and single mothers
- d. child poverty
- e. causes of poverty

2. In *Expanded Academic ASAP* do a basic keyword search for **poverty**. Which of the following terms are in the search assist?

- a. poverty reduction
- b. poverty and health
- c. poverty relief
- d. poverty in children
- e. poverty and schools

3. In *MasterFILE Premier* do a basic search for **poverty**. Select the terms that are under subject on the results page.

- a. social problems
- b. poverty and welfare
- c. poverty and class warfare
- d. poverty--marriage
- e. poverty rate

Article summary and reflection.

Joyce Valenza echoed many of the same sentiments that Jane, John, and I had expressed about our patrons. She wrote that as teacher-librarians we need to understand our patrons. She divided young adult information-seeking behavior into four areas: cognitive, affective, social, and physical.

In the cognitive domain Valenza noted that students often lack the ability to use successful keywords to find information. They tend to use natural language queries. In addition, they lack understanding of how different search sites are organized and are unable to use them effectively. This observation of Valenza reinforces our observations of students' search terms. All three of us are addressing this need, but we need to address it in different ways. To align better, I need to make students aware of how to use the auto-suggestions and subject suggestions in the databases. In Google I do show them related searches. When the students get to Magic City Campus, John does more in-depth work on keyword and subject searching in the databases. We also both talk about terminology. That is a bigger issue at the university level as terms become more scholarly.

The affective domain also comes into play with students and information seeking behavior. Reducing uncertainty and complexity for students will improve their results. Valenza observed that students become frustrated with too much information and dense text. They prefer sites with bullets and graphics as students are predominantly visual learners. Also, students tend to overrate their ability to find information and thus don't have the skills to keep searching when they encounter obstacles. The term *satisficing*, or good enough, defines many students' searches. Since students prefer collaborative seamless environments, they don't want to use multiple places, such as the different databases. Addressing this issue is a concern of all three of us. We feel it is necessary to have students evaluate their sources so they value the integrity of the databases enough to choose them over Google when doing research. John and I have found that instead of denigrating Google, we show the advantages of Google searches over the databases, but we also show the advantages of the databases over Google. I think one of the biggest obstacles to successful searching is student weakness in search terminology.

The third area Valenza considers about information seeking behavior is the sociocultural domain. Studies have shown that young adults are most successful in information seeking when they can discuss their problems with others. Social barriers that may exist include lack of encouragement, unhelpful librarians, and confusion about the assignment. All three of us do emphasize the need to communicate with students our willingness to help them. I found students often feel they are intrusive if they ask for help. By telling students that it is my job to help them and I like to help them, they seem more willing to ask for my assistance.

The final area is the physical. The library of the past required students physically to be in that environment to access information. Today that is not the case. However, students still become frustrated with barriers that prevent them from doing their work. This may be library hours, filters, or inability to access databases. I do see the inability to access databases as a barrier because outside of school students are required to use a password to access the databases. I do hand out the password to the students; however, I am not supposed to put it online, so sometimes students do not have the password.

Valenza then emphasized areas that she feels teacher-librarians need to address. One is to challenge satisficing by changing students' attitudes. Instead of accepting sources that are good enough, students need to value quality sources. Also, the tasks that students are asked to do must be challenging and relevant and use authentic Web 2.0 tools. This will require a Library 2.0.

We all agree that the library of books and Shh no longer exists. However, many people do not realize that the library of today is even more relevant because of the digital age. We library media specialists have even more to do to teach how to access information whether it is a book, a magazine, a database article, or a Google website and how to evaluate that information. Satisficing will not suffice.

Valenza, J. K. (2006). They might be gurus. *Teacher Librarian*, 34 (1), 18+.

Note about assignment.

Konnie, I was confused about the assignment, so I did a mash-up of two. Option Two listed below is the option I was following until I read your post on Monday, Nov. 14. Your post included Requirement for credit for workshop. I did #1 from Option Two and #2 from the second assignment. If this is unacceptable, let me know, and I will redo it.

First Assignment I read.

Option Two: "Transitions" Post-Conference Workshop, 1 continuing education credit in LMIS

I did this. 1. Earn **one credit for attending the NDLA (Saturday) Post Conference Workshop (September 24, 2011)** and setting up a work session with a regional academic librarian to discuss the issues from the workshop and come up with at least two assessment questions to present for an assessment tool that will be developed for incremental grade levels culminating in a final exit assessment which can then be shared with higher education.

2. Questions and a reflection about your meeting with your academic counterpart, the questions, and what was learned at the workshop along with an explanation about how you are (personally) working to become a 21st Century Librarian and/or how you are working to "close the gap" between K-12 and academic information literacy skills. Assignment is due on **Dec. 1, 2011** and must be emailed to Konnie Wightman at Konnie.wightman@vcsu.edu

Second Assignment I read.

Requirement for credit for workshop

So here's how it goes: We meet for the 4 hours on Saturday. During the session we will be talking about how academic and K-12 librarians can collaborate better to meet student needs as they enter college.

Credit Assignment:

Your assignment: you as a K-12 librarian would meet with your regional academic librarian (or another academic librarian) before December 1, 2011, and try to figure out a way that you can meet some of the needs of your students and get help from the college librarian. When you have some ideas lined up during that meeting, you will write a reflection paper on how the meeting went, what ideas you talked about, how you plan to implement them with a timeline, and then explain how (or if) the workshop and collaboration plans will work to your students' advantage. You'll also explain how you hope to keep the collaboration active for the future. For example, you and she might plan a lesson together that you both teach in the high school before the kids graduate. Explain how that will help them as they enter college. Since the lesson or project won't be done before December, explain what you foresee as an outcome of this collaboration. You and your academic librarians may have ideas other than that, which you are welcome to write about in your reflection.

I did this. You will also need to do some research on your own which will be to find and summarize one article from either the K-12 or academic level of education which discusses and perhaps shares data about the importance of academic and school librarians working together for student success. This might be an article regarding the drop out rate of college students, the remedial courses colleges need to offer, the search skills that high school students have (or don't have), etc. In other words, any article that sheds some light on how schools and librarians can bridge the gap between H.S. graduation and entry into college/university. You need to use APA format for the citation of this article and include it at the end of your reflection. Be sure to put your name, school and date on your reflection and send it to: konnie.wightman@vcsu.edu as an attachment saved in either PDF or rtf format **on or before December 1, 2011.**