

**Transitioning
High School Students to
College Students
using the Library**

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Transitioning High School Students to College Students using the Library

When I registered for the Saturday morning post conference at the NDLA State Annual Conference, I was really signing up because I needed credit. I mean, the reason for my hesitation was on a Saturday morning! But, I have to be honest, I thoroughly enjoyed the meeting and found it very rewarding. I am glad I attended the conference and I am happy to know that there is the realization that we need to do more to get the high school students familiar with the academic libraries. The libraries can be so helpful, and yet at the same time, overwhelming for small town high school students.

The transition from high school to being a college student is overwhelming. There are so many changes and challenges to face. College students are expected to research and write at a level than some students are not accustomed to. How do we prepare the high school students for this?

Here are some suggestions: I think that it would be beneficial for all high school seniors to take a library skills class where they are taught the Library of Congress system. Most academic libraries and some public libraries use this system, but the high school libraries seem to use the Dewey Decimal system. Even if students aren't going to attend college, it still would help them in case their public library would use the Library of Congress system. Also, during this class, the teacher could arrange a tour of an academic library. If the school system is too far removed from an academic library, then maybe academic libraries could provide a virtual tour of their library through the internet.

I also think that it should be part of the general education for college students to have a library skills semester class that is required. In that class, the system the college uses could be taught and tours of the library could be given. Faculty who work in the library could be introduced and they could discuss their particular part of the library and how they can help the student.

In visiting with Deb Syvertson, Library Director at Dakota College, she suggested the teaching of ODIN to high school seniors. She also suggested that seniors who are taking dual classes having a tour of the academic libraries. Because of this discussion, several questions came forth that could be used as an assessment tool for high school seniors.

QUESTIONS:

1. Explain how the Library of Congress system helps you find books in your college libraries?
2. What is a scholarly journal?
3. How do you determine a reliable website for scholarly assignments?

In trying to close the gap for information literacy skills, I, as a middle school librarian, teach library skills to all the sixth graders. I meet with each sixth grade class once during the week and present a library skills lesson. I teach them how to find books according to the Dewey Decimal system, different literary genres and how to use different reference materials. I introduce them also to the statewide databases that our school offers for research.

I think that we as librarians have made the first step in helping high school seniors become more acquainted with their academic libraries, just by realizing that there is a problem and that something needs to be done to help these students. By addressing the problem, solutions will arise and that will be for the benefit of all students.

ARTICLE SUMMARY

I read two articles dealing with information literacy. First of all, what is information literacy? According to Sharon A. Weiner, Professor and W. Wayne Booker Chair in Information Literacy of Purdue University, information literacy is the ability to find, use, and communicate information effectively and ethically. Information literacy is essential for lifelong learning and empowers individuals and societies. In the article, Information Literacy: A Neglected Core Competency, it states that our college students tend to use the same small set of information resources, course readings, and Google and Wikipedia. Because of students' lack of experience and proper researching techniques, they become frustrated and overwhelmed as research progresses. So, they just find enough information that will let them "get by" to complete course assignments. The White House members recognized this issue in October when they declared it as National Information Literacy Awareness Month. Information Literacy doesn't belong to any single discipline, but instead belongs to all of the different disciplines. Our educational system needs to start addressing this discipline and critical thinking in the elementary school. It needs to be continually stressed and taught all the way through school and in all subject areas.

In the second article that I read, A Collaborative Approach to Information Literacy in the Freshman Seminar by Elizabeth Blakesley Lindsay from Washington State University, librarians spent eight weeks teaching information literacy and research skills to a group of students who would need that information for teaching a freshman general education class on information literacy. A librarian was assigned to each section and the librarian would work with the peer facilitator to become familiar with the topic being covered by the group. They felt the program has led to improvements in the competency of information literacy skills among the students. This program strives to create information literate critical thinking students and someday critical thinking citizens.

References

Weiner, S. A. (2010). Information literacy: A neglected core competency. *EDUCAUSE Quarterly* , 33(1), Retrieved from [http://www.educause.edu/EDUCAUSE Quarterly/EDUCAUS](http://www.educause.edu/EDUCAUSEQuarterly/EDUCAUS)

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