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Instruction @ the URI Libraries

Employers Ask for "Patient but Persistent" Researchers
How Can We Help?

This May, another group of talented, accomplished students, ready and looking for work will graduate from URI. Will they be prepared for the expectations of their employers? A 2012 study compared the expectation of employers and the research skills of new hires from college:

> "The employers we interviewed said that they expected young hires to be patient but persistent researchers.…employers said they needed them to be capable of engaging co-workers in an iterative searching process, retrieving information in a variety of formats, identifying patterns in an array of sources, and diving into sources of information… At worst, they said, some college hires solved information problems with a lightning quick Google search, a scan of the first couple of pages of results, and a linear answer-finding approach." (Head, 2012, p. 24)

A companion 2013 article, "What Information Competencies Matter in Today's Workplace?" published in the journal *Library and Information Research* further reports on research that explores and compares the information research competencies of new college graduates with what their new employers expect and hope for.

"Based on analysis of interview data, we identified four of the most frequently discussed information competencies that employers said new graduates lacked:

1. engaging team members during research process;
2. retrieving information using a variety of formats;
3. finding patterns and making connections;
4. exploring a topic thoroughly." (Head, Van Hoeck, Eschler, & Fullerton, 2013, p. 87)

How can instructors prepare URI students to be "patient but persistent researchers"?

- Develop and strengthen students' researching skills by teaching information research strategies that go beyond Google.
- Scaffold the research process by including a short graded exercise or assignment before a larger finished product.
- Assess not only the finished product, but also the "mud," the process of finding, evaluating, and applying information from a variety of sources used for completing projects and assignments.

References
Head, A.J. (2012). *Learning curve: How college graduates solve information problems once they join the workplace.* Seattle: U of Washington http://projectinfolit.org/pdfs/PIL_fall2012_workplaceStudy_FullReport_Revised.pdf

Head, A.J., Van Hoeck, M., Eschler, J. & Fullerton S. (2013). "What information competencies matter in today's workplace?" *Library and Information Research, 37*(114) 75-104. http://www.lirgjournal.org.uk/lir/ojs/index.php/lir/article/view/557/593

A common question: Citing works cited by others

One of the questions we get at the Info & Research Help Desk is how to cite a source that's mentioned in another source. This often comes up when the citation to the reference in a bibliography doesn't match the format required for the project or paper.

But the real problem is not the format: the problem is that attempting to cite someone else's source without actually having consulted it is not sound research. Without consulting that original source, the researcher runs the risk of missing additional context and information from the original source, and may potentially be accused of fabrication.

Writers and researchers should only cite the source actually consulted. If a student has consulted a scholarly paper by Jane Doe which discusses John Smith's dissertation - but the student hasn't actually looked at John Smith's dissertation - the scholarly paper by Jane Doe is the appropriate work to cite.

Instead of trying to cite John Smith's dissertation without first-hand knowledge of the contents, researchers can instead say "John Smith, as cited in Jane Doe's article, notes…" Even better is consulting the original source. For assistance in locating the original source, please contact the Info & Research Help Desk.

By the Numbers
In Fall 2013…

1,837 URI 101, MUS 119, and BIO 130 students learned about the Robert L. Carothers Library & Learning Commons' service points and where to get research help.

1,127 WRT 104 and 106 students came to the library for an introduction to finding articles.

387 EGR 105 students attended a lecture & 416 attended a lab to learn to use engineering reference databases to identify citations to appropriate articles.

Related Updates
New Library Website

The University Libraries will have a new website soon! You'll still find your favorite links, but with improved language and functionality. Preview the site at http://web.uri.edu/library and contact the Library Webmasters with questions at libweb@etal.uri.edu.

Search Savvy Seminars

In the Spring, the University Libraries will be continuing its Search Savvy Seminar series. January will feature RefWorks Flow, a new citation manager from the makers of RefWorks. Other upcoming topics include Copyright and Fair Use (February), Google Tips & Tricks (March), and Altmetrics (April). For more information, contact Amanda Izenstark at amanda@uri.edu.