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Instruction @ the URI Libraries - January 2017

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Instruction @ the URI Libraries



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How Prepared Are First-Year Students for College Level Research? Transition from High School to College Brings Information Literacy Challenges

During her Fall 2016 sabbatical research, Prof. Mary MacDonald surveyed and interviewed Rhode Island School Library Media Specialists - the title referring to high school librarians - to discern how much information research instruction and experience high school students generally received before graduation.

Preliminary results of the survey indicate that School Library Media Specialists (SLMSs) think that 45.5% of RI high school students are not achieving desired levels of information literacy at a rate appropriate for 21st century learning. The good news is that 36.4% perceive students are achieving desired information literacy levels. On the other hand, another 18.2% of SLMSs reported that they did not know if students enrolled in their schools were achieving information literacy skills.

What does this mean for instructors at URI?

Consider that survey respondents also report that 68.2% of high schools have access to ten or fewer online article databases at their high school.

Compared with the over 220 databases available through the URI Libraries, this creates a real information challenge for new students. Additionally, SLMSs responded that only 36.3% of high school seniors are able to identify the differences between scholarly and popular information sources. It is important to understand that High School SLMSs are

often limited by time, the scope of the assignments, and a school district's philosophies and resources.

One respondent commented that, "...teachers make assumptions that their students are more information literate than they really are and also that teachers don't feel they have enough time to give me [instruction time] so they can cover curriculum."

Today's college freshmen face real hurdles when it comes to transitioning from high school level information research to college level expectations. As instructors, we need to be clear when giving assignment instructions, providing examples of appropriate information sources and research tools. For more information about how the URI University Libraries can help you and your students, contact Prof. Mary MacDonald at marymac@uri.edu.

This sabbatical research builds on the previous work done by Ramona Islam and Lisa Murno. Islam, R. L., & Murno, L. A. (2006). From Perceptions to Connections: Informing Information Literacy Program Planning in Academic Libraries Through Examination of High School Library Media Center Curricula. *College & Research Libraries*, 67(6), 492-514. <http://crl.acrl.org/content/67/6/491.full.pdf+html>

Management Survey: New Graduates Lacking in Writing Skills, Critical Thinking, Public Speaking, and Attention to Detail

PayScale, a company focused on sharing employee compensation data, released a report in 2016 outlining skills that managers commonly found new college graduates lacked. Additionally, the report also indicated that while new grads generally felt that their skills were adequate for their new jobs, managers did not feel new hires' skills were up to speed.

Some of these skills can be developed and honed through course work and information literacy components. For example, having students use standard disciplinary citation formats requires attention to detail. Exercises that emphasize well planned online searching and evaluation of information sources strengthen transferable critical thinking skills, regardless of discipline. Finally, offering students more opportunities to practice writing about and presenting their progress on their research and their work can strengthen communication skills. This is easily accomplished through reflective research logs and short presentations.

For tips and ideas to help students strengthen these skills, see the [Information Literacy Toolkit](#), and for the full press release about the report, see <http://www.payscale.com/data-packages/job-skills>.

By the Numbers

In Fall 2016...

1,135 WRT 104 and 106 students came to the library for an introduction to finding articles.

512 EGR 105 students attended a lab to learn to use engineering reference databases to identify citations to appropriate articles.

1,148 students in 46 additional classes from 14 academic departments attended sessions targeted to the information research needs of their classes.

Related Updates

Media Resource Center Changes, Microform Moves, and Makerspace Debuts

Over the summer, the Media Resource Center's office closed, and Curator Angel Ferria has moved to the new makerspace on the first floor of the Carothers Library. This new area - named __space.uri - provides support for student designs and production, including a virtual reality station and 3D printing capabilities. Any student is welcome to use the space, which opened this fall. For details, please contact Angel Ferria at afferria@uri.edu.

Spring 2017 Search Savvy Seminars

Join us for sessions on Getting Started @ the URI Libraries, RefWorks, finding Census information, and more. A full schedule will be posted to the Libraries' website, the URI events calendar, and our social media pages. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Google+](#) for updates!

Instruction @ the URI Libraries provides updates and tips related to the URI Libraries' instruction programs and offerings, and is distributed in January, May, and August.

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