

Glendale College Library Information Competency Workshops Improving Library Research - -Outline

Core Competencies:

- Develop and implement an effective search strategy appropriate for an information need by:
 - Differentiating various types of information sources (specialized encyclopedias, article databases, library catalogs, search engines, etc.) and the purpose of each.
 - Choosing and accessing appropriate information sources for the research question.
 - Evaluate information by:
 - Distinguishing reliable from unreliable sources of information, scholarly and popular sources, substantiated facts and point of view.
 - Assessing the authority, accuracy relevance, reliability, completeness, and timeliness of information.
 - Organize, synthesize, and communicate information by:
 - Integrating information from a variety of sources appropriate to the research question.
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Since exposure to scholarly journals is an emphasis of Exercise I, give each group one scholarly journal and one periodical of a different type: newspaper, commentary, trade, or popular.

1. Before the workshop begins, place pairs of periodicals (one scholarly; one other) between every two workstations. Students will use these for **Exercise 1**.
2. Along with the periodicals, give each "group" a copy of the "**Differences between Magazines and Journals**" worksheet (Exercise 1—worksheets located in top drawer of LB 313 filing cabinet)
3. **Do not** distribute handouts for this workshop until the discussion part of Exercise 1.
4. Introduction, agenda, etc. Explain that this workshop will cover the following research skills: (2 minutes)
 - a. types of periodicals and how to identify them (exercise 1)
 - b. criteria for evaluating search results (exercise 2)
5. Exercise 1: Point out that when they're doing **Exercise 1**, they should look at the cover, the publication information inside the first few pages of the periodical, the individual articles (especially first and last pages of an article), flip through the entire periodical, etc. and record their answers on the worksheet. Then have a couple of groups report back to the class. Also point out that the distinction between different types of periodicals can be blurry at times. Example: *Dance Magazine* is accessible to any reader with an interest in dance, yet it also serves as a professional/trade publication, as well as a source for dance scholars. **(20 min.)**

- ✓ Have the small groups (I like to have groups of two do it so that they can each be examining one periodical and then switch) look at the two periodicals that are on their desks and complete the worksheet which asks them leading questions about the differences between scholarly journals and other types of periodicals.
 - ✓ Discuss the answers they came up with for the worksheet. These will represent (hopefully) good criteria for distinguishing scholarly from other types of periodicals. You might want to write their ideas on the white board for all to see.
 - ✓ Finally, give them the workshop handout and point out to them the **Types of Periodicals** chart on page 2.
6. Keys to Identifying Scholarly/peer Reviewed/Refereed Journals in Online Databases: Now go over the information on the first page of the handout, pointing out that it is relatively easy to identify a scholarly journal article when you have it in your hands; it is more difficult when you are looking at electronic information. Still, there are differences and it is important to recognize them. The keys on the first page of the handout will help. **(5 minutes)**
7. Introduce **Exercise 2** by discussing the **Criteria for Evaluating Search Results**. Perhaps give some examples of topics and sources that may or may not be useful, timely, appropriate, or authoritative for those topics. Examples:
- A book on American Women in History, 1970-2000 would not be **useful** or **timely** for finding information on Margaret Sanger (women's rights activist, 1879-1966).
 - An advertisement from *Glamour* magazine would be **appropriate** for an essay on how women are portrayed in the media.
 - A web site on the Navajo Indians written by a sixth-grader would not be an **authoritative** source for a Cultural Anthropology course research paper on the Navajo culture. **(10 min.)**
8. Maybe go through **Exercise 2, Section A** (on page 3) as a class instead of having them complete it and then reviewing. Ask them to explain their answers; for example, if they say the book *Can we put an end to sweatshops?* would be useful for the first sample topic (Ex. 2, Section A), then ask them why (it's not really useful so explain why to them). **(5 min.)**
9. **Exercise 2, Section B** is similar to part A, but is based on a search in ProQuest for articles on social criticism in cartoons. In this example, a case can be made for all of the articles, except for #6 being relevant to the research topic. The scholarly /peer-reviewed journals are #s 1,2,3, and 6, though you might want to discuss how the articles from Time and the New York Times might also be credible sources; it's just important to recognize them for what they are. Finally, for this particular topic, I don't think timeliness is a huge concern; discuss with students how and why they agree or disagree.

10. Exercise 2, Section C has students repeat the steps of evaluating for usefulness and timeliness, but then it also takes them a step beyond to appropriateness and authority. Have them try **Section C**, numbers 1 and 2 on their own. Then, they continue working on numbers 3-6 on their own, or you can do them together as a class. **(10 min.)**
11. **Please ask students to spend the last 3 minutes of the class taking the brief assessment "quiz" for this workshop. Leave these in the folder with the roster and Zovig will pass them along to Nancy.**
12. Please collect the Exercise 1 worksheets from the groups and leave them in the folder with the roster as well.

THANKS!