

Miami University Libraries

Teaching Evaluation – Instructional Assessment Report

Librarian Instructor Jenny Presnell

Date of Session October 1, 2010

Session Details (Class, Professor) English 111, Vilyanski

This English 111 class was one of the “laptop” classes in which all of the students had their own laptops. It took place in the classroom.

Learning Objectives

- a. Identify the characteristics of a peer reviewed, research article
- b. Construct an efficient search in Academic Search Complete

Readings, Handouts, other Materials used in the Session [attached at the end of the evaluation].

Brief Narrative Description of Session

This English 111 class was at the Inquiry #3 paper, which asks students to examine an “current issue”. We talked about where to find books and such sources as CQ Researcher and Opposing Viewpoints. I passed out a series of print journals and magazines and asked students to identify what kind of publication they had and what were the characteristics of a journal or magazine article. After class discussion, we talked about how to search in Academic Search Complete, to read the results, and find journals. Students used the first handout below to record their observations.

Assessment Method Utilized

Students completed a one minute paper, answering two questions:

1. Name one thing you’ve learned from this session.
2. Tell me one thing you are still confused about.

The instructor asked for the students’ comments, which I sent to her and included the replies in brackets below, as well as a additional handout on evaluation.

Summary of Assessment Results

Name one thing you’ve learned from this session	Tell me one thing you are still confused about. [reply in brackets].
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I learned how to find citing for articles and books• I learned the difference between journals and magazines and how to search the library database for resources.• Learned about how it does the MLA citing for you and you can email the sources to yourself.• I learned about the library database and	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I am still unsure of how to find good journals online• Nothing I am still confused about• I am actually not confused.• I wondered how many books, etc. comprise the system. [Miami has over 3 million. OhioLINK 48 million books and library materials.]• How can we tell if a website is valid and

<p>how to use it.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learned how to look up books on the library website. • The difference between a journal and a magazine • I learned how to look up articles and books • The information was very informative however, a lot of the information for my topic is outdated and sparse. • I learned how to order books and have them shipped for your access. • Magazines are deceptively titled. • I learned how to use a database and what type of literary medium is most credible. • I learned the differences between magazines and journals • Magazines are deceptively titled • The searches with the library website helps SO much!! Thanks! • Learned the difference between journals and magazines • I learned how to find reliable sources on the internet • I learned how to use the website more efficiently 	<p>useful. [see other attachment]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm a bit confused on what type of paper tws is used for. • The website is convoluted, why? • How to search certain articles [Can't search through the full text of most articles, only by using an index which usually has abstracts and subject headings] • I am still unsure how to check out books, I missed that part • Credible sources [see other attachment] • Credible sources • I am confused why other internet sources are not usable source of information if the source is valid and cites valid sources [The internet generally has encyclopedic information and you're beyond using encyclopedias – you're not doing a report but discussing research which isn't on a website generally because websites lack this peer review process] • Nothing, I took a library tour for architecture and learned most of this before • Probably on how to request a book online and differentiate between journals and magazines on the Miami library site. [Can't differentiate journals and mags from the Miami library site – that is from the catalog, need to use and index like Academic Search Complete and restrict to peer reviewed] • I would like to know other online databases that are available (i.e. Ohiolink) [Use Research by Subject] • I am still confused about how to find specific things, there is just a lot to choose from.
--	---

Did you meet your learning objectives?

Learning Objective	Exceeded	Met	Did not Meet
a		yes	
b		yes	

Reflection on Assessment/Implications for Future Teaching

Even though this class was at 8 am, we eventually had a lively discussion. Understanding peer reviewed was the biggest hurdle. The results of the one minute paper are conflicting with some seemingly indicating that they understood how to find quality research articles and some still confused. If we had had more time, we would have explored other indexes.

Handouts – see next page

Scholarly / Popular Comparison
Miami University Libraries
Sept. 30, 2010

What are the characteristics of:

Journals	Magazines	Wikipedia

ENG 111

General Research Resources and Techniques

Miami University Libraries
Jenny Presnell | 204 King Library | presnejl@muohio.edu

Definitions

- **Monograph** (book). A treatise on a single topic, generally detailed. It is issued generally only once, unlike a journal or magazine that has more than one issue and includes many topics.
 - **Sources for Books**
 - *Miami's Catalog* MiamiLINK |Catalogs
 - *OhioLINK* MiamiLINK |Catalogs
 - *WorldCat* MiamiLINK |Catalogs
- **Periodical**
 - **Journal**. The audience for journals is academics, specialists, and researchers in the field on which the journal focuses. Often this is a narrow audience. Journals are one of the ways that researchers talk to one another. The language in these articles can be quite specialized and sometimes difficult for general readers. The frequency of publication is usually quarterly or less. Articles contain lots of footnotes and a bibliography of sources.
 - **Magazine**. Magazines are read by the general public and reflect the culture, thought and politics of the day. The language used is more accessible to all levels of readers. These publications usually contain images and either report or provide summary information on research or topical issues. They contain little documentation, such as footnotes, bibliographies, or complicated statistical evidence. Magazines are generally published more frequently than journals, monthly, weekly or twice monthly.

Scholarly V. Popular Articles (Journals V. Magazines)

Journals	Magazines
Signed article by author. Author is usually scholar in the field who is an expert.	Articles often unsigned. Articles often written by journalists or non-specialists in the field about which they are writing.
Language is technical and aimed at a specialized audience, usually those who also study in the field. Uses the jargon of the discipline.	Language is simpler and aimed at a general audience. Anyone who is interested could read the article.
Documentation in the form of notes, footnotes and bibliography.	Has no documentation, but often sources are mentioned in the article.
Complicated charts and graphs. Although may not be present in many historical journal articles	Glossy photographs and simple charts or graphs.
Articles have been through a scholarly referee process.	An editor has approved articles.



Evaluation of Sources: A Guide

Evaluation of Sources: Content Below

- General Evaluation Criteria
- Propaganda or Research

General Evaluation Criteria

Author authority - Who is the author and what is his or her affiliation? Most journal articles and many books have biographical information on the author at the bottom of the first page or at the back of the book. Is the author from a reputable institution or organization? Does that institution or organization reflect a political viewpoint through which the author's research might be filtered? Is the author a practicing historian in the topic of history about which he or she is writing?

Audience and purpose -- Understanding the audience for which the author wrote the text is important. Is it for other scholars or practitioners, who will understand the same professional concepts and terminology? Can you tell by the language of the book or journal article that the target audience is a more general audience? If so, is the content scholarly enough to be useful for your research? Checking footnotes and documentation can help you make this determination. Remember the best way to understand an author's purpose is to read the introduction of a book or journal article, where the argument is usually spelled out quite clearly.

Accuracy and completeness - Since you have already planned the search strategy you will employ as you consult Miami's online catalog, as well as one or two periodical indexes, you already have an idea about the scope of your topic. Use this knowledge to think about issues that should logically be addressed by the works you are employing as sources. Has the author covered all of the necessary topics? If important issues or themes are excluded, this may affect your research, and it might also signal problems with your sources. Compare content across all sources. If one of your sources does not consider many of the same issues, authors, and pieces of evidence that your other sources take into account, this may be a clue that this resource may not be reliable. That does not mean an author must agree with all of your other sources, but all of the authors should enter into the same debate.

Footnotes and documentation - Look at the footnotes and documentation. If little documentation is presented in the form of references to primary sources, charts or graphs, you should look at the source with a very critical eye. An important component of presenting research is to identify findings and include proof for what you have found and where you have found it, so that others may replicate and judge your results. A footnote (at the bottom of a page) or an endnote (at the back of a chapter or at the end of a journal article or book) should contain all of the information necessary to find the "data" or item it refers to in the text. You should be able to go back and look up the referenced journal article, for instance, and see on a particular page what your original source was quoting or referencing

Propaganda or Research?

As you conduct your research, you must carefully evaluate information to distinguish sources that have been created with the *intent* to deceive or to sway opinion. Propaganda is defined as “the spreading of ideas, information, or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person.” (*Merriam-Webster Online*) Propaganda uses half-truths or takes facts out of context so that those who read or view it will draw erroneous or over-simplified conclusions. Below is a table that contrasts scholarship and propaganda. (Sonia Bodi, “Scholarship or Propaganda: How Can Librarians Help Undergraduates Tell the Difference?” *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 21 (Jan. 1995): 21-25.) Be sure the sources you find for your secondary sources (and the research you produce) fit in the scholarship column.

Scholarship	Propaganda
Describes the limits of data	Has excessive claims of certainty (we have the only way, or the right view)
Presents accurate descriptions of alternative views	Makes personal attacks/ridicule
Presents data that does not favor preferred views as well as data that supports these	Presents emotional appeals
Settles disputes by use of generally accepted criteria for evaluating data	Distorts data unfavorable to preferred views
Looks for counter-examples	Suppresses contradictory views
Uses language in agreed-upon ways	Suppresses contradictory facts
Updates information	Appeals to popular prejudices
Admits own ignorance	Relies on suggestion (e.g. negative innuendo)
Attempts to discuss general laws/principles	Devalues thought/critical appraisal
Finds own field/area of investigation difficult and full of holes	Transforms words to suit aims
Relies on critical thinking skills	Magnifies or minimizes problems to suit the purpose.
	Presents information/views out of context