



2-17-2011

Exploring Library Room 20 - The Library Instruction Lair

Audrey H. Schwinn
Gettysburg College

Follow this and additional works at: <https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/libinternblog>

 Part of the [Information Literacy Commons](#)

Share feedback about the accessibility of this item.

Schwinn, Audrey H., "Exploring Library Room 20 - The Library Instruction Lair" (2011). *Blogging the Library*. 116.
<https://cupola.gettysburg.edu/libinternblog/116>

This open access blog post is brought to you by The Cupola: Scholarship at Gettysburg College. It has been accepted for inclusion by an authorized administrator of The Cupola. For more information, please contact cupola@gettysburg.edu.

Exploring Library Room 20 - The Library Instruction Lair

Abstract

For the last couple of weeks, in addition to working behind the Reference Desk, I have also been further investigating the Instruction part of the Reference & Instruction Department. While some instruction necessarily happens at the desk, the librarians have a chance to get more in-depth into teaching research skills when professors bring their students into the computer lab classroom in the basement. In the past couple weeks I have observed an English 101 and a 200-level Psych class, and my own Environmental Issues class was also brought in to meet with a librarian. [*excerpt*]

Keywords

Musselman Library, Gettysburg College, Fortenbaugh Internship, Reference and Instruction

Disciplines

Information Literacy | Library and Information Science

Comments

The Interns at Gettysburg College's Musselman Library captured their internship experiences since the spring of 2011. Over time the blog has featured Fortenbaugh, Smith, and Holley interns. They shared updates on semester long projects, responded to blogging prompts, and documented their individual intern experience.

Creative Commons License

Creative

Commons

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/)

License

Blogging the Library

The Interns @ Gettysburg College's Musselman Library

Exploring Library Room 20 - The Library Instruction Lair

Thursday, February 17, 2011

By: Audrey Schwinn '11

For the last couple of weeks, in addition to working behind the Reference Desk, I have also been further investigating the Instruction part of the Reference & Instruction Department. While some instruction necessarily happens at the desk, the librarians have a chance to get more in-depth into teaching research skills when professors bring their students into the computer lab classroom in the basement. In the past couple weeks I have observed an English 101 and a 200-level Psych class, and my own Environmental Issues class was also brought in to meet with a librarian.

In many ways, the three different classes I attended were quite the same. They began with trying to find out which kind of library/research skills the students had and which ones they generally lack, and then an introduction to the library homepage. Also, under the departmental research guides, every class that comes into the library has its own web-page with information specific to their particular research assignments. Then comes instructing the students in the best way to utilize the databases, which databases will suit them best, and also the inevitable discussion of what exactly a "peer-reviewed" article is and why they are useful. There are a variety of examples and activities to engage students in the research process and familiarize them with the library's resources. In the end it is hoped that the students leave the room with a better understanding of how good research is done and with some ideas for where to start finding the answers they need.

The computer lab classroom itself is tucked in the corner of the basement and in a way reminds me of the Instruction Librarian's secret underground lair. They herd the students down the hall past the bathrooms and into their lab where they then infect them with research skills before releasing them back into the campus. But students are not like lab rats and good research skills are not infectious, so it isn't quite that easy. Unfortunately some students aren't really interested in learning new ways to do research. Perhaps they already have some research skills and feel that theirs are sufficient, or perhaps the students are only taking the class to fill a requirement and aren't very interested in the subject matter. Only demonstrating the best way to research is often not enough - the librarians have also become quite good at "selling" the information. My experiences with teaching people are very limited, but I have noticed that if you start by pointing out that "this will make your lives a lot easier," people pay a lot more attention. Sometimes libraries are less about a place to keep all the books, and more about a place to help people learn.

<http://bloggingthelibrary2012.blogspot.com/>