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The Research Consultation: What Do You Do When You're Meeting with a Student?

Clinton K. Baugess
Gettysburg College

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The Research Consultation: What Do You Do When You're Meeting with a Student?

Abstract

Research consultations are individualized research sessions tailored to meet a student's particular information need. This infographic outlines six best practices for reference librarians or other information professionals providing research consultations to an undergraduate population.

Keywords

research consultation, reference services, research assistance

Disciplines

Information Literacy | Library and Information Science

The Research Consultation

What do you do when you're meeting with a student?

A few best practices for working with a student or small group in a research consultation

Getting Started

STEP
1



ASK QUESTIONS

The more you know beforehand, the better prepared you'll be. What is the question they're trying to answer? Where do they feel they're struggling? Where have they been looking so far?

STEP
2



GIVE UP CONTROL

Keep it student centered. Listen. Let the student do the typing (they'll remember more). Ask questions and guide, but let the student do it.

STEP
3



MIRROR THE RESEARCH PROCESS

This is a teaching opportunity. Outline logical steps through the process that the student can follow. This is about more than finding sources for a paper; it's about helping students become information literate, independent information users.

KEEP IN MIND:

Let the student do most of the talking. Sometimes it's just helpful to talk through what you're thinking and doing with someone who isn't a professor.

Wrapping Up

STEP
4



KEEP THE STUDENT ACTIVE

This isn't a lecture. The student should be searching, taking notes, saving or printing articles, and recording call numbers and subject headings. They should be able to jump back into searching when on their own.

STEP
5



DON'T LET THEM LEAVE EMPTY HANDED

While each student's information need is unique, they should leave with an action plan, a guide to what to do next. If they found articles, print them. If they found books, volunteer to help them find them in the stacks.

STEP
6



FOLLOW-UP

When you see the student again in the library or on campus, ask how that paper or project is going. Did they find what they needed? If not, invite them to come by the reference desk or to send you an email. They'll remember your interest and come back again.

YOU'RE NOT THE RESEARCHER

As with any reference interaction, sometimes students want you to do the research for them. Try to keep it focused on search strategies. Don't just hand them sources. Make sure they pause to evaluate and decide if a source really meets their information need or if they need to revise their search.

FINAL DETAILS

WHAT'S NEW LATELY?

Research consultations are just another part of our information literacy instruction program. Through consultations students are able to receive personalized instruction tailored to their individual information need.

2011-12
171



2012-13
258



RECORD THE CONSULTATION:

Don't forget to record all of the consultation data in the spreadsheet. Making that part of your process is a good way to remember.

Created by:
Clinton Baugess
Reference & Instruction Department
Musselman Library
Gettysburg College

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Piktochart
make information beautiful