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Class Observation

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Class Observation

Abstract

As the Fortenbaugh Intern in Research and Instruction, a few weeks ago I had the opportunity to observe a couple of class research sessions which were led by some of the Research and Instruction librarians. Coming from a student perspective, I had always found these sessions informative. Each session has allowed me to become more comfortable with my major's research guide and permits me to learn more about the various databases (shout out to *JSTOR*) that are available to use. In short, I have always enjoyed these sessions that are led by Research and Instruction librarians, because I am able to review what skills I have learned previously, and allow those skills to become the foundation that allows me to learn and advance my research skills.

[*excerpt*]

Keywords

Gettysburg College, Musselman Library, Fortenbaugh Intern, Research Help Desk

Disciplines

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.



Blogging the Library

The Interns @ Gettysburg College's Musselman Library

Class Observation

April 3, 2017

by Abigail Major

As the Fortenbaugh Intern in Research and Instruction, a few weeks ago I had the opportunity to observe a couple of class research sessions which were led by some of the Research and Instruction librarians. Coming from a student perspective, I had always found these sessions informative. Each session has allowed me to become more comfortable with my major's research guide and permits me to learn more about the various databases (shout out to *JSTOR*) that are available to use. In short, I have always enjoyed these sessions that are led by Research and Instruction librarians, because I am able to review what skills I have learned previously, and allow those skills to become the foundation that allows me to learn and advance my research skills.

As I sat in to watch these two class sessions, I felt like I was observing the session from a pair of different eyes. What I noticed more was the structure and organization of the information session, and how the sessions were organized. One of the aspects that I really appreciated was that each librarian attempted to find out where everyone was in their research journey – some students were familiar with concepts and certain databases while others were not. Asking the students or even allowing them to fill out a quick online survey allowed the Research and Instruction librarians to tailor their session to the needs of the students, which meant that students were able to get as much out of the session as possible.

Another aspect that I enjoyed was how the sessions allowed an opportunity to work individually as well as collaboratively in small groups. For example, a student may have been given a few minutes to look at a source to decide if it was grey literature, and then they might work in small groups of 3 – 4 to discuss their decision. Then the class might reconvene, and all the students work together to determine if the source is indeed grey literature.

In general, I believe that offering such sessions to students who are in the midst or just beginning the research journey for one of their classes is extremely helpful. Working on finding sources, on determining if its a trustworthy source, peer reviewed, primary or secondary, searching through different databases, exploring different journals, working on the organization of your paper or defining and narrowing your topic – these are just a few examples of what information sessions can cover and what the Research and Instruction librarians can assist you with!

While there are similarities shared among the research sessions as a whole, the fact that (1) each session is tailored to serve each class's interests, (2) the librarians make each second count in the session, (3) want to make sure that you too walk away feeling that the time you spent with them was beneficial, and (4) that you feel more and more confident in your skills as a student here at Gettysburg are just a few reasons why these sessions are so valuable. (And besides, if you have any questions after your class session, you can always stop by the Research Help Desk!)

To conclude, I enjoyed shadowing a couple of information sessions and believe that by attending these sessions I have been able to understand the research process better, which not only helps me as a student but also as someone who works at the Research Help Desk! By understanding the research process better, I will be able to assist others better and more effectively as they embark on their own research journey.