

A Library...What's that? Information Literacy & Giving Students Life-long Research Skills

Abstract

The internet has made information available at the touch of a button. The need for an instant answer points many of us, including our students, to false or inaccurate sources of information. The effectiveness of all critical thinking and decision making begins with the quality of information the student has access to. Participants will engage in a session on helping students effectively use their academic library. The session will discuss Information Literacy, or the ability to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information, and present strategies to teach and practice these skills in the classroom.

Keywords: management, information literacy, digital literacy, academic integrity

Introduction

The proposed session is designed as an activity or exercise session. The activity is designed to be an interactive presentation that will assist management faculty in working with their academic library to give students a better understanding of its value and access to its resources. The activity will give attendees a general overview and provide examples of how library resources support management education. The session will provide source and search parameters that are transferable to many library databases and other disciplinary resources. In order to understand the “student perspective,” attendees will also get the opportunity to participate by practicing how to use these search tools and how to identify high quality sources.

This activity is designed for all management undergraduate and graduate courses and can be used with traditional or non-traditional students. A face-to-face or hybrid class (face-to-face & online components) works best for this activity but the information can be presented in digital format to work with online courses as well. Specifically, we will discuss how to use the library resources more effectively so students may gather the highest quality sources available. The higher the quality of information they have access to the better their critical thinking and problem solving skills will be. This creates an informed individual who can have the maximum impact on their environment for positive change.

Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications

The internet and mobile devices have made information available at our fingertips. The need for a quick answer to any question can point many of us, including our students, to meager sources that can lead to incorrect information or poor quality research. The effectiveness of all critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving begins with the quality of information the student has access to. The theme for this year’s MOBTS conference is “Teaching Agents for

Positive Change” and focuses on developing students’ character, not just their knowledge base. This session will help educators teach students how to be more discerning and effective when researching a topic. Increasing a student’s critical thinking skills will help them be more impactful throughout their whole life.

A common problem in management education is that students are often dismissive of how the library can be a useful place to find and understand information. Additionally, faculty, particularly those who teach upper level courses, often feel the library workshops students are exposed to early in their college careers are sufficient, when in reality they barely scratch the surface on teaching students how to find high-quality information.

In 2016, librarians from around the country came together and built a new information literacy framework in order to help information seekers re-think how they interact with information, as well as have students, faculty and librarians reexamine each’s role in the information process (“Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education,” 2015). Information literacy is defined as, “the set of skills required to identify information sources, access information, evaluate it and use it effectively, efficiently and ethically (Julien and Barker, 2009). According to those who created the framework, students should understand that they play a greater role and responsibility in creating new knowledge, in understanding the contours and the changing dynamics of the world of information, and in using information, data, and scholarship in an ethical manner. In many cases students have been trained to take what their teachers say as the “final truth,” and students are dissuaded from forming their own conclusions beyond what is made available to them from designated sources (i.e. teacher, textbook, certain media outlets). However, much of what we, as educators, want our students to develop is the ability to find and critically evaluate information and draw their own conclusions about

management topics. Many studies have explored students' lack of ability to find and critically evaluate information (e.g. Scott & O'Sullivan, 2005; Branch, 2003; O'Hanlon, 2002; Maughan, 2001). In response to this, faculty have a greater responsibility in designing curricula and assignments that foster enhanced engagement with the core ideas about information and scholarship within their disciplines. Lastly, librarians have a greater responsibility in identifying core ideas within their own knowledge domain that can extend learning for students, in creating a new cohesive curriculum for information literacy, and in collaborating more extensively with faculty.

When thoughtfully included as part of management curriculum, information literacy can transform a student's understanding of how to find, evaluate, and incorporate quality information into their research, which are skills necessary both during their college careers and later in their chosen professions. The goal is to assist students in developing high-quality research skills that will serve them throughout their life and help them become stronger agents for positive change.

Learning Objectives

At the end of the session participants will...

1. Have a better understanding of information literacy and strategize how to best incorporate it into their courses. Understand the resources available through their library.
2. Learn to collaborate with librarians to develop materials that will help students better understand how to locate, evaluate, and incorporate quality information.
3. Explore a sample student learning information literacy session.

As discussed above, this activity will provide management educators with the tools needed to help their students develop the skills necessary to navigate their academic library to any management related topic.

Exercise Overview

As previously discussed, this session will provide faculty with the resources needed to teach their students how to use the library more effectively.

Assessing and Teaching Information Literacy

1. Taking the first steps toward collaboration. Presenters will discuss with participants suggestions for starting the conversation with librarians. The discussion will include brainstorming opportunities to improve student learning and research strategies. Initial questions may include, where do faculty feel their students fall short? Where do librarians think the students are falling short? Are research expectations appropriate for the class level or does the college/university library provide resources which will support the research objectives of courses?
2. Presenters will discuss with participants how to identify “ownership” of activities, such as who oversees the review and/or intervention of student work? Depending on the size of the institution’s library, librarians may be able to act as co-instructors for courses (some institutions refer to this as an embedded librarians), where the librarian will provide the instruction for information literacy related assignments as well as provide guidance for improvement in those skills. In other situations, faculty may be trained by librarians on information literacy and develop and monitor student performance themselves.

3. Review sample packet of classroom activities and assessment options. Activities for this section will include a sample pre-session/intervention information literacy diagnostic (see sample Appendix 1); advanced search strategies (see sample Appendix 2), and lessons on academic integrity (see sample Appendix 2).
4. Adoption of learning activities to best meet the needs for student improvement. Once the students have been trained on information literacy tactics then they are given the opportunity to practice using research tools to search several different management topics which can be customized to fit the needs to each course,

Session Overview

We are requesting a 60 or 90-minute format. The material can be made to accommodate either. A 90-minute session would provide more time for an in-depth look at available library resources, while a 60-minute session would include a basic overview. Reference materials will be provided for attendees regardless of the time provided. The session will be broken into four parts. A summary of each part is included below. The breakdown of the session will be as follows:

1. Presenter 1: Introduction of presenters and objectives for the session (5 minutes),
2. Presenter 2: Overview of information literacy within management (15 or 20 minutes depending on if the session is 60 or 90 minutes),
3. Presenter 1: Discussion of areas of weakness for students related to source material (10 or 15 minutes),
4. Presenter 2: Discussion of possible information literacy interventions for management students (20 or 40 minutes)
5. Question, answer and wrap-up (10 or 15 minutes).

Segment 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

The session will begin with introductions by Presenter 1 and a brief discussion on each portion of the session. Materials for each attendee will be handed out at this time as well.

Segment 2: Overview of Information Literacy within Management (15 or 20 minutes)

The second portion of the session will have Presenter 2 provide an overview of information literacy and its application within a management program. Participants will be polled to see what their understanding of information literacy as well as if and how they incorporate it into their courses.

Segment 3: Discussion of Areas of Weakness for Students Related to Source Material (10 or 15 minutes)

The third portion of the session will include Presenter 1 discussing issues seen within management courses where students are struggling to incorporate high-quality information to improve their critical thinking and discernment skills. These are areas where there is opportunity for library intervention.

Segment 4: Discussion of Possible Information Literacy Interventions for Management Students (20 or 40 minutes)

Presenter 2 will discuss developed activities (as seen in the handout) and how they may be customized for students and faculty at other institutions. Afterwards, participants will be asked to reflect on the information provided and discuss how they may incorporate the information into their courses.

Segment 5: Question/Answer and Wrap-up (10 or 15 minutes)

In the last section, participants will have the opportunity to ask questions. Presenters will then provide summative comments and reference material for attendees to take with them. We

hope that this session will help management educators teach their students use library resources more effectively to find high quality sources of information.

References

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Appendix A

Information Literacy Diagnostic

Purpose: This diagnostic will help the faculty member and librarian determine the resources and intervention students may need to succeed in the course. Questions were developed based on the level of the class and subject matter. The questions below were used in a 400-level capstone management class. The questions address both library resources and search strategies with which management students should be familiar based on previous sessions within the program and in general education.

Distribution: A library diagnostic can be administered in both paper and electronic format. It is recommended it is completed early in the course.

Question development: Questions may be developed in multiple choice, short answer, or a combination of both. Short answer take longer to grade and do not provide the option for standard answers that multiple choice do. However, depending on the information assessed, short answer may lead to richer results.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

Library resources:

What type of information can you find when using LexisNexis?

Which database provides access to articles (scholarly and popular) as well as access to yearly company profiles?

Which database specializes in providing access to international business information?

What is the Library's Journal Finder?

Sources:

What is a professional or trade publication?

How should you evaluate information results when conducting a search?

You want to do a paper on employee screening in the food services industry. If you are not sure which subject terms to use, which of the following is the best search strategy for this topic?

What does putting OR between two terms do to the search?

What does putting AND between two terms do to the search?

Appendix B

Purpose: No matter what the level, it is good to have students practice search strategies. Practice allows students the opportunity to explore more robust and creative search strategies, beyond one set of key terms and the first page of results.

Often, student are not familiar with the filters and search options databases offer to researchers. Depending on the research required for a course, activities may be developed that focus on key features students may need for future assignments.

Distribution: A library diagnostic can be administered in both paper and electronic format. It is recommended it is completed early in the course, in preparation for assignments that require students to do research.

3 SAMPLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assignment 1: Using Journal Finder

The following homework assignment was developed for a capstone level course, which required students to use specific journals. For students to see where certain journals were indexed, the librarian developed an activity for students to practice using a resources called “Journal Finder” to see if and how a publication was covered by the library databases. Since the class was an online course, students were also given a short video tutorial showing how to use the resource.

Step 1. Using Journal Finder, see if the library has access to the following publications:

1. Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly
2. Nonprofit Management and Leadership
3. Journal of the Academy of Management
4. Wall Street Journal

Step 2. If the library does, write down HOW the library has access (print access and/or name of databases) and the DATE COVERAGE for each format (if there is more than one).

For example, if I were to look up if the library had access to the *International Journal of Organizational Leadership*, I would see the library has access two ways: from 2012 to present in Directory of Open Access Journals and from 01/01/2013 to present in ABI/INFORM Global.

Assignment 2: Using One Article to Find Another

The following assignment was developed for a capstone level course after instructors were concerned at the type of information students were citing in their paper. Through class discussions, it was shown students often use one set of key terms when searching for information and limiting themselves to the first page of results. Such a strategy does not always lead to students finding information complementary to each other. Since the class was an online course, students were also given a short video tutorial showing how to use the resource.

Step 1. Look up the following articles in Business Source Premier (Note: You can use Journal Finder to help you).

1. Mayfield, J., & Mayfield, M. (2009). The Role of Leader Motivating Language in Employee Absenteeism. *Journal of Business Communication*, 46(4), 455-479.
2. Lowry, P. E. (1994). Selection methods; Comparison of assessment centers with personnel records evaluations. *Public Personnel Management*, 23(3), 383.
3. Vigoda-Gadot, E., & Beerli, I. (2012). Change-Oriented Organizational Citizenship Behavior in Public Administration: The Power of Leadership and the Cost of Organizational Politics. *Journal Of Public Administration Research & Theory*, 22(3), 573-596.

Step 2. Write down the subject areas associated with each article (Note: You don't have to put them all; write down at least two or three for each).

Step 3. Pick one article citation in the above list. Conduct a search and find a similar article to the one you picked. Write down the original citation, the search strategy you used and the new article you found. Please cite the new article using APA style.

Assignment 3: Academic Integrity

The following assignment was developed for a capstone level course after the instructor was concerned at how students were citing and using information. Since the class was an online course, students were also given a short tutorial explaining both direct quotation and paraphrasing. Students would complete preliminary questions prior to the larger academic integrity assignment. The second part of the section provided students with a small sample from a publication and prompted students for two citations.

Prompt: Imagine you are writing a paper on fundraising strategies for small academic institutions. In your searching, you find an article that would work well in your research. Below is a screen shot of the article's bibliographic information, as well as an excerpt from the article. Follow the directions listed below. *You must complete both steps of this exercise to be considered for full credit.*

Step 1: Please read the excerpt provided and paraphrase the information presented, using correct APA in-text format.

Step 2: Please cite the article using correct APA bibliographic format.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

The old college try: Volunteers in fundraising efforts for small liberal arts colleges.

Authors: Abzug, Jody¹
Abzug, Rikki²

Source: *New Directions for Philanthropic Fundraising*, Spring2003, Vol. 2003 Issue 39, p105-118. 14p.

ARTICLE EXCERPT

Effective roles for alumni volunteers

While all of the schools surveyed use alumni volunteers for some form of class agent program in their annual fund, the recruitment methods vary. Some staff members recruit all of their class volunteers, while at other schools one alumnus is chosen to head their class's efforts, and he or she is responsible for recruiting others to help. At two of the schools, associate class agents are chosen (voted or selected) for the following year while still enrolled as seniors.