**Introduction**.

A college education is about more than acquiring subject knowledge; it also enables students to develop the soft skills sought by employers (MacDermott & Ortiz, 2017). Two such skills that offer value both during and after a student’s college career are research and writing (Bauer, 2018). Despite the importance of these skills, in a 2017 survey of 543 U.S. colleges and universities, “librarians estimated that less than a third of first-year students (28%) are prepared for college-level research” (Dixon).

When it comes to research behavior, we know that students are largely self-taught, their searches are not thorough, and they prefer Internet sources to library databases (Bauer, 2018). Students often struggle to find scholarly sources, and only attempt to do so when a researched assignment is imminent. They also rarely ask for help from librarians (Bauer, 2018; Head, 2013). This is concerning, since research shows that research skills and writing ability improve after library instruction (Bauer, 2018). However, despite its value across disciplines, library instruction is typically limited primarily to the lower-level composition classroom setting (Jamieson, 2016; Dixon, 2017).

Informed by this context, we (a librarian and a professor of management) designed a semester-long teaching project consisting of a series of weekly assignments in a course designed for first-semester freshman business majors. This project had four aims. The first of these was improving research skills. The second goal of the project was improving writing skills. Third, we sought to support students’ development of critical thinking ability. Fourth and finally, we hoped to encourage students to engage with the work of researchers in their field of study.

While we found this approach to be especially helpful for early undergraduate students, it is transferable to other contexts, and while it is well-suited for traditional students, it would also be beneficial for non-traditional students.

**Theoretical Foundation/Teaching Implications**.

This project was informed by the previous work of several scholars, including Bauer’s (2018) work on the information seeking behavior of business students; Cavdar & Doe’s (2012) research on the development of critical thinking through writing assignments; Deveci’s (2018) work on collaborative writing assignments; Head’s (2013) and Jamieson’s (2016) work on the research and writing skills of first-year students; and Judge’s (2020) study on students’ academic confidence and motivation.

**Learning Objectives**.

* Objective 1: The students will summarize the findings of a scholarly article.
* Objective 2: The students will demonstrate the ability to describe the applications of scholarly research.
* Objective 3: The students will be able to list appropriate subject headings for a scholarly article.

**Exercise Overview**.

The activity takes about 45 minutes from start to finish. Start with distributing copy of the same article and worksheet to each student, then allow students to complete the worksheet individually. While they are working, the instructor will circulate and assist as needed with questions. Once the students are done, they will review their answers with a partner or small group. Then the class will come together to discuss. This can be done without the full class review at the end, allowing small groups to either work on different articles and turn in a worksheet, or to present to the class. Over the course of the semester, the students will develop the skills to understand a scholarly article and by the end of the semester, write a narrative summary of a scholarly article. This activity could also be done online using an electronic version of the worksheet.

**Session Description.**

* **15 minutes: Participants will complete a short version of the worksheet activity given to students.**
* **20 minutes: Presenters will discuss the instructional approach and classroom activities used.**
* **15 minutes: Presenters will share the results of student evaluations of the project.**
* **10 minutes: Questions**