Instruction a la Carte Menu

While the sheer amount and kinds of information keeps growing, the length of library instruction sessions in which research skills are taught has remained constant. Below is a partial list of the skills students (and faculty) need to access and evaluate information effectively and use it ethically, with the approximate time needed to teach each of these skills. We stress hands-on activities with as much time for practice as possible. This list is intended to help faculty to decide what we should teach in the limited time available.

**Instruction is prepared to your individual tastes, though all menu items are well done.**

**To the extent that time permits, we teach the skills below by means of hands-on activities.**

**Topics and approximate time requirements**

**Searching for books in MOSYS (Moravian’s Online System)**
30 minutes

Students learn about the searching options available, especially the difference between keyword and subject searching; the use of Subject Headings to improve searches, and mechanics, such as determining where the item is located and marking sources for printing.

**Subject-Specific Article Searching**
50 minutes each

Most disciplines have specialized article search tools, such as MLA, PsycINFO, Science Direct, CINAHL, ATLA, Historical Abstracts, etc. These resources generally produce better results than multidisciplinary article search tools. Students learn/practice selecting appropriate search terms (controlled vocabulary) using the thesaurus (when available) and using features in the article search tool to making the most of its searching capability, such as generating additional sources from a results list, creating citations for the sources they’ve found, etc.

**Note:** We encourage faculty teaching writing-intensive courses to schedule a class(es) on subject-specific database searching.

**Controlled Vocabulary** (Subject Headings)
30 minutes

Students’ searching skills improve if they know how to use the language of specialized research tools to improve their searches. They learn how to check subject headings or descriptors to identify the most effective search terms.
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<th>Topic</th>
<th>Duration</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Scholarly vs. Popular Sources</strong></td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
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<td>Students learn how to distinguish between the two and why they will probably need to search the scholarship in the discipline for most assignments.</td>
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| **Primary vs. Secondary Sources**              | 25 minutes |
| Students learn the difference between these sources, the place of each in academic research, and how to find them. |

| **Basic Web Searching Skills**                 | 70 minutes |
| Students learn how to take advantage of advanced searching options to do the most effective searching and get hands-on practice creating searches. |

| **Fee-Based vs. Free Web**                      | 70 minutes |
| Students learn the difference between the two and the value of each resource for academic research. |

| **Website Evaluation**                          | 70 minutes |
| Students are given a set of criteria by which to judge the suitability of Websites as sources for academic research. The class affords an opportunity to do a practice exercise in applying the criteria to a variety of sites. |

| **Finding a Full-Text Article with an Incomplete Citation** | 25 minutes |
| Students learn to do title and author searching and how to employ other strategies for finding a complete citation and/or the full-text of articles |

| **Ethical and Legal Issues Relating to Information**     | 2 classes |
| |
This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism and copyright law for both online and paper sources. Students learn about the college’s plagiarism policy and how to do papers and presentations in such a way that they are both academically honest and copyright compliant.

**Note:** Students will need multiple opportunities to practice these skills. The Reeves Research Tutorial (which you can link to from the library home page) can be used to augment and reinforce formal teaching.

**In LINC 101 classes we typically cover the skills below:**

- Searching *Academic Search Elite*, a multidisciplinary database
- Recognizing the difference between scholarly and popular sources
- Searching the catalog (MOSYS)

70 minutes