

**WML Information Literacy Instruction Assessment 2018-19**  
**Classroom Activity Report – Individual**

**Faculty Librarian:** Donna Witek

**Semester:** Spring 2019

**Course Number and Name:** WRTG 107: Composition (EP)

**Course Instructor (Last Name):** Zera

**Date(s) of Information Literacy Instruction:** 2/13/2019

**Time(s) of Information Literacy Instruction:** 9:00-9:50am and 10:00-10:50am

**Location:** WML 306

**Number of Students Registered in Course:** 18 and 18

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**Summary of research assignment or task**

This information literacy lesson supports a writing assignment called Formal Paper 1 in which students are tasked with proving that a national or international issue needs our attention right now, through the use of evidence drawn from reliable information sources found in the Library's databases. A paper outline and works cited page is due five days after the information literacy class is scheduled. Students are required to cite their sources in MLA format and expected to find and use 3-5 reliable database sources in their papers.

I have taught this lesson in support of Prof. Zera's Formal Paper 1 many times. I teach the research techniques needed for this paper using the databases Academic Search Elite (EBSCO) and ProQuest Central. I also use a guided worksheet I have created, titled "Research as Inquiry: Using the Search Process to Strategically Explore your Topic," which guides students through the different phases of the research process including keyword generation and database searching.

Note that I have begun using a version of this worksheet across all WRTG 107 sections in which I teach information literacy, customizing the worksheet to each course instructor's assignment and course needs. I also share the Five Ws of Source Evaluation handout with students in this class, but we do not spend class time focusing on it.

The materials I distribute for this lesson can be found attached.

## **Classroom Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) – at least one, no more than three**

SLO1: As a result of this information literacy instruction, students will analyze their topics in order to generate initial search terms.

SLO2: As a result of this information literacy instruction, students will practice searching for articles in the Library’s databases in order to better inform themselves about their topics.

SLO3: As a result of this information literacy instruction, students will organize the sources they find in order to prepare to responsibly use them as evidence in their essays.

## **How will you know how students are doing as they work toward meeting these outcomes?**

SLO1: Quadrant activity and database searching practice, both facilitated by my “Research as Inquiry” worksheet

SLO2: Database searching practice facilitated by my “Research as Inquiry” worksheet; Formal Paper 1 submissions would also provide evidence of the extent to which the sources found in the databases have informed the students’ understanding of their topics

SLO3: There isn’t a way to directly assess this learning outcome in my lesson; however, successful citing and attribution practices demonstrated in their Formal Paper 1 submissions would provide evidence of students meeting this outcome

Note: My “Research as Inquiry” worksheet indicates a fourth classroom SLO for this lesson focused on applying the Five Ws framework for source evaluation; in practice, this outcome receives the least amount of time and coverage in what is usually a 50-minute lesson, so distributing and briefly introducing the Five Ws of Source Evaluation handout is the primary means by which this outcome is addressed.

## **Based on your experience teaching this class and any assessment of student work you were able to do, what can you change next time to improve how you teach it? Or, what was successful that you want to be sure to do again the next time you teach it?**

Generally speaking, this jam-packed lesson addresses all of the techniques, practices, and resources Prof. Zera requests that the librarian teaches in the information literacy class session supporting Formal Paper 1.

However, it is clear by the fact that I am technically trying to teach in support of four classroom student learning outcomes, when a comfortable limit for classroom outcomes is three, that the biggest challenge with this lesson is to figure out how to address all parts of the research process in a way that students will retain (e.g., through active learning and application). The quadrant activity and database searching overview are both strengths in the lesson, though the latter would be strengthened further by planning a structured and focused opportunity for students to spend time searching the databases for information about their own topics. Prof. Zera’s sections of WRTG 107 are often 50-minute classes, which makes this restructuring of the time a challenge.

One idea for improving this lesson is to consider “flipping” some of the content about the research process using an online research guide that introduces the basics of getting started with research using the Library’s databases. This would relieve the pressure to try to “cover” so much material in the 50-minute class session and leave more time for active learning and application of techniques and concepts.

Across two sections of the course, 33 students completed the anonymous First-Year Library Instruction Survey that asks students, “After today's session, what is something that you will change when doing research?” Aspects of the research process that students identified in response to this question include using the Library’s databases over Google for finding reliable information, the importance of brainstorming keywords before searching, techniques for filtering and narrowing results in the databases, and the importance of reading the full article before using and citing it in their writing. These responses seem to indicate that this lesson, as a broad introduction to doing research using the Library’s databases, is generally successful at meeting this aim.

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**Information Literacy Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) – at least one, no more than four – this information literacy instruction supports**

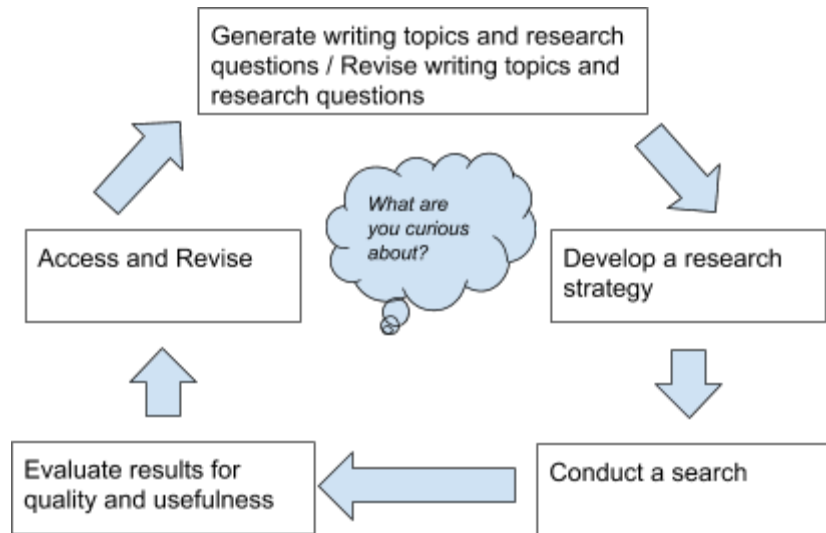
PLO1: Students will investigate differing viewpoints that they encounter in their strategic exploration of topics in order to be able to develop their own informed arguments or hypotheses.

PLO2: Students will gain insight and understanding about diverse sources of information in order to evaluate and use resources appropriately for their information needs.

PLO4: Students will articulate the key elements in their research questions in order to develop and execute a search strategy.

PLO6: Students will properly distinguish between their own ideas and the intellectual property of others in order to ethically use information and demonstrate academic integrity.

## Research as Inquiry: Using the Search Process to Strategically Explore your Topic



*Student Learning Outcome: You will analyze your research topic (i.e., a national or international issue) in order to brainstorm initial search terms.*

**Quadrant Activity:** To help develop a research question from a broad topic and generate search terms, use the quadrant below. Start with a broad idea and gradually narrow down your focus by answering the following questions:

<p><b>What?</b></p> <p><u>What is your topic?</u></p> <p><u>What other issues/events are similar or related to your topic?</u></p>	<p><b>Who?</b></p> <p><u>Who is affected by your topic? Who is involved?</u></p>
<p><b>How?</b></p> <p><u>How does your topic impact society, culture, politics, and/or economics?</u></p>	<p><b>Why?</b></p> <p><u>Why does this topic matter to you?</u></p> <p><u>Why should it matter to others?</u></p>

*Quadrant Activity adapted from University Libraries, University of Maryland*

## **Searching for Articles:**

*Student Learning Outcome: You will practice searching for articles in the Library's databases in order to better inform yourself about your topic (i.e., a national or international issue).*

**Databases in the "General Topics" list:** ProQuest Central and Academic Search Elite (EBSCO)

Using your answers to the Quadrant Activity, what **focused search terms** could you use to search for articles about your topic? Write them down here:

What are three useful filters you can use on the database results screen to narrow your search?

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_

**How to access articles:** Full-Text in database → if not available Full-Text, Check Article Linker for Full-Text in another database → if not available in another database, place an Interlibrary Loan Request

## **Critically Evaluate the Sources You Find:**

*Student Learning Outcome: You will apply the Five Ws of Source Evaluation in order to select reliable information sources appropriate for your topic (i.e., a national or international issue) and build a case for its importance.*

**The Five Ws of Source Evaluation** — WHO created the source? / WHAT is the purpose of the source? / WHEN was the source published? / WHERE does the information in the source come from? / WHY is this source useful to you? — **are found on the second handout.**

## **Organizing and Citing What You Find:**

*Student Learning Outcome: You will organize the sources you find in order to prepare to responsibly use them as evidence in your essay.*

**Organizing Your Research:** Create a log where you list the source you plan to use and then immediately beneath it answer the questions, "What new information does this source provide for me? What did I learn from it? Which parts of the source gave me this new information?"

### **Citing Techniques:**

- Database "Cite" tool
- Email article + citation to yourself
- CiteThisForMe: <https://www.citethisforme.com/>
- OWL at Purdue (Google "OWL MLA")

### **For more Citation Help:**

Library Home Page →  
Research Services →  
Citation Help OR Ask a Librarian

**At the end of today's class...**

**VISIT**

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/scrantonIL>

**and answer the 3-question survey about your class today.**

**What course are you in? = WRTG 107**

**Who is the Librarian teaching the session? = Donna Witek**

## Evaluating Sources with the Five Ws

Often finding information is less of a problem than figuring out whether that information will be appropriate for your project.

One way to decide whether a source is “good” for your project or not is to begin by asking some questions about the source.

Remember! **Evaluation is a holistic process.** One of these questions isn’t enough to determine a source’s usefulness. You need to take them all into account.

### WHO created the source?

- † What expertise does the author/organization have to write on this topic?
  
- † What are their credentials? How are they connected to the field they are writing about?
  
- † Are they affiliated with any specific organizations? Which ones? Could this impact their reliability?

### WHAT is the purpose of the source?

- ① What is the source saying about your topic? What points or argument is it making?
  
- ① What type of publication is the source published in? Scholarly/academic? Newspaper? Magazine? Trade? Report? Something else?
  
- ① Who is the intended audience for the source?

### WHERE does the information in the source come from?

- 🌐 Are there references within or at the end of the source? What types of other sources are cited?
  
- 🌐 Is the author writing from their own experience? How can you tell?
  
- 🌐 Did the author interview anyone in the source? If so, who?

### WHEN was the source published?

- ① Does your topic require very recent information, or will older sources be acceptable or even preferred?
  
- ① Are there any historical events connected to your topic? When was the source published in relation to those events?
  
- ① If no date is provided how might this impact the reliability or usefulness of the information in this source?

### WHY is this source useful to you?

- ✍ Does the information in the source help to answer your research question or develop your argument?
  
- ✍ How does this information inform your research? How will you use this information in your project?
  
- ✍ Is the source written at an appropriate level for your needs (i.e. not too simplistic/not too advanced)?