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Free Online News Literacy Resources

By Sara Shiver McBride

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Lately it seems that the topic of news literacy is at the forefront of everyone's mind when we talk about information literacy. At every level from K-12 educators through adult services librarians, we've been discussing our concerns about whether children and adults can distinguish editorial content from advertising, discover the authorship of articles and websites, verify claims for themselves, and distinguish between credible and false information. **Evaluating Information: The Cornerstone of Civic Online Reasoning** is a 2015 study from the Stanford History Education Group where middle school, high school, and college students were given 56 news literacy tasks like identifying advertisements on a website, determining the reliability of a partisan site, and distinguishing between a news article and an opinion column. Their performance was, unsurprisingly to many teachers and librarians, poor.

Fortunately, many institutions have assembled free in-depth news literacy courses for both young people and adult learners to improve their abilities to evaluate the veracity and viewpoint of the media they consume.

The Center for News Literacy of the Stony Brook University School of Journalism offers a

variety of resources for educators and citizens to improve news literacy. They have partnered with the University of Hong Kong for a Coursera MOOC, **Making Sense of the News**. This six week course is directed at college students and adult learners.

SchoolJournalism.org is administered by the Youth Journalism Initiative of the American Society of News Editors. The site features a wealth of information for student journalists as well as an extensive section on news and media literacy, including a **Model News Literacy Curriculum** offering lesson plans for secondary school language arts, math, science, and social studies classrooms.

A **Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0** License allows teachers to adapt the lessons to fit the needs of their students.

Newseum's educational outreach arm, **NewseumED**, offers free primary sources, standards-aligned lesson plans, and learning materials on history, news literacy, and civics. There are materials here for all levels from elementary students through adult learners.

“
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As librarians, we have a unique opportunity to take a leadership role in teaching, promoting, and modeling news literacy skills to learners of all ages. These resources allow students and information professionals to access professional materials with no cost barrier to any interested institution or individual.

iTeach 4 workshop, June 14

This full-day event, co-sponsored by SCLA's College and University Section and Information Literacy Round Table, is a collaborative workshop on instruction and learning in the library environment. This year's theme, "Transitions and the Roles Libraries Play," builds on recent discussions in South Carolina's library communities about the progression from high school to college, from community college to university, and from higher education to the workplace. Further details are [HERE](#).

WHEN: June 14

WHERE: Thomas Cooper Library, USC Campus

Includes lunch

MORE: www.scla.org/iteach



Next Time

By **Amy Edwards**

Health Science Librarian,
University of South Carolina

There is something about the end of the academic year that makes me think back and reflect. What worked? What didn't? What could be integrated into next year's sessions? Reflection can be the driving force for change in the instructional classroom. Reflection is an evolving process (Oakleaf, 2011) which can occur before, during, or following an instructional session. There are several strategies to jumpstart the reflective process. Here are just a few:

Reflective Journaling

Following a class, record your thoughts. As Forrest (2008) noted, "the process of writing helps us to reflect" (p. 231). Reflections can be kept digitally or handwritten. If you keep outlines of your workshops, try adding a space for reflections. Did the student's struggle with any component of the session? Any informative questions? Was the pacing on track?

Observe

Observing others teach and watching students

present can provide opportunities to reflect and learn. As Char Booth (2011) reported, you can learn both from effective and not so effective teachers (p. 27). Even the less effective instructors have strengths in their teaching. Build upon your reflections. When watching student presentations, look for indications of their understanding of information literacy skills. Are there areas of weakness that can be addressed in future information literacy sessions?

Talk

Whether informal or scheduled, conversations with peers can lead to new insights. Check out the essay by **Meredith Farkas** (2016). She outlined the continuum of peer learning experiences from peer observation and meetings, to peer coaching, and peer workshoping.

Video Reflection

Lessons don't always appear as they seem. **The Harvard Graduate School of Education** (Tamer, 2014) has posted some videos of their education students documenting their thoughts on being recorded during an instructional session. Although this approach might be intimidating for many, there can be meaningful rewards.

References

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Internet Safety and our Patrons

By **Jade Geary**

Instructional Developer,
University of South Carolina

I have been thinking lately about information practices and the internet. In this new digital age, we are presented with learners that share a great deal of their lives online and are unaware of the privacy of implications of doing this. Further, some patrons do not understand how this lack of privacy plays in to their searching habits (i.e. Google filter bubbles, ads, etc.). We often focus on helping patrons learn how to search and evaluate information but we do not always focus on the importance of information safety. I think we often think that these patrons were taught some of this information before they come to our individual libraries, but the truth is they are not. Many of our patrons grew up with the internet and thus are learning along with us about internet and information safety. While we may not be able to change some of their social media sharing behavior, we can give them better tools for protecting their information safely and securely.

Below are some resources that you can integrate in to your classroom, instruction sessions, or program planning to assist your patrons

on information literacy.

The Privacy Paradox is a series that ran through the public radio podcast, Note to Self. This series focuses on educating individuals on how they can better protect their private information. This series is a great one to share with 21st century learners that will challenge them to think about their information sharing habits. You can participate in a "5 day plan to take back digital identity" or just enjoy the podcast episodes.

Who owns your data? (Hint: It's not you) this video breaks down big data in a simple way and shares the implications of our digital footprint. This would make for a great video to show at the beginning of a session to start a conversation about your digital footprint.

Teaching Patrons from Web Junction has collected resources from various libraries on how to teach internet privacy to your patrons. These resources would be great to use at your home library.

Participate in **Choose Privacy Week** that takes place May 1-7. This subset of ALA has great resources and suggestions for helping promote privacy to your patrons.

I hope that these give you a starting point to help your patrons be more aware of the importance of online privacy.

Information literacy

It's a time for thinking about transitions

By **Joe Askins**

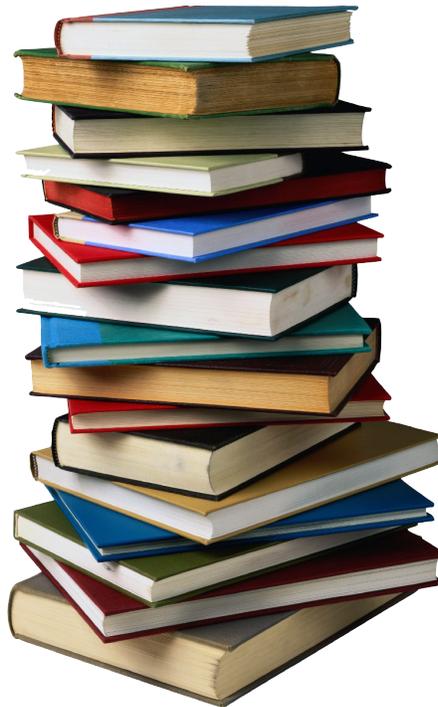
Information Literacy Programs Librarians,
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It's a time for thinking about transitions here at ILRT. As you may already know, our iTeach 4 workshop, scheduled for June 14, will include presentations about the ways librarians working in secondary schools and higher-ed can ease our students' transitions from one level to the next. Here at Thomas Cooper Library, I'll be offering a live section of our half-semester, one-credit Information Literacy course, LIBR 101, and I've decided to limit this section to first- and second-year students who are still in the midst of that school-to-university transition.

As I begin to design my syllabus, I keep referring back to work that has emerged from two information literacy initiatives over the past decade, Dr. Alison Head's **Project Information Literacy** and Dr. Jane Secker & Dr. Emma Coonan's **A New Curriculum for Information Literacy** (or ANCIL), both of which offer excellent insight into the information literacy needs of the student in the high-school-to-higher-ed transition phase.

Project Information Literacy

Head's 2013 study into the thoughts and habits of the college freshman, "**Learning the Ropes: How Freshmen Conduct Course Research Once They Enter College,**" confirms much of what seasoned instructional librarians already know: that freshmen often have trouble formulating efficient searches, sifting through the results of those searches, and understanding and synthesizing information from the sources they eventually choose. A thread running through all of "Learning the Ropes" is the confusion, frustration, and anxiety that many of



these students experience as they begin to conduct research; words like "struggled," "stymied," "inadequate," "overwhelmed," "guarded," and "embarrassed" pepper the report's findings. Adjusting to the library itself can be an intimidating process – according to Head, the average college library involved in her study "had 19 times as many online library databases and 9 times as many books and journals as the average high school library."

While Head doesn't attempt to offer any "quick fixes" for these problems, it's clear that librarians working with these new students must be ready to engage with the affective domain of learning. The adaptation to a new academic environ-

ment can be an exhilarating and exhausting experience, and we should develop activities and assignments that give them opportunity to reflect on their own emotional reactions to the research process. (Additionally, Head's statistics about the differences in high school and collegiate libraries may suggest that an introductory walk-through of library spaces still has a place in library-based instruction, less for the purpose of orientation – "literature is here, the study carrels are over there" – and more for the purpose of allowing students to confront and acclimate to an environment that can often elicit fear.)

ANCIL

In Secker & Coonan's **detailed curriculum**, information literacy instruction during this early transitional phase may need to focus less on the nuts and bolts of searching for, evaluating, and referencing academic sources, and more on "learning to learn." The change in expectations from high school and higher education, the use of genre conventions (such as presentation styles and tones of voice) in academia, the recognition of personal learning styles and needs, and, yes, the impact of emotion on the learning process are all key discussion points recommended for new students.

Thankfully, Secker & Coonan do provide some examples of activities that work well for transitional students: they can explore the purposes and comparative strengths and limitations of a variety of publication formats, such as books and periodicals; they can identify and compare the sources of news and information with which they're most familiar; and they can describe the internal strategies that they already use to evaluate and critique new information that they encounter in their everyday lives.