



1992

A Model for College Library Visits

Lucretia McCulley

University of Richmond, lmcculle@richmond.edu

Christine Campbell

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/university-libraries-publications>



Part of the [Information Literacy Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

McCulley, Lucretia, and Christine Campbell. "A Model for College Library Visits." *The Book Report* 10, no. 4 (1992): 32-33.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University Libraries at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in University Libraries Faculty and Staff Publications by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu.

A Model for College Library Visits

By Christine Campbell &
Lucretia McCulley

Classroom teachers and the librarians from both the high school and the college worked together to make a research project especially beneficial to the students.

In the last decade, many college and university libraries have begun offering formal instruction programs to high school students who can benefit from college-level resources. The benefits of such programs are numerous: an opportunity for high school students to “bridge the gap” between the use of high school libraries and college libraries; recruitment opportunities for the college; and the opportunity for high school and college librarians to work closely together.

To make such programs successful, it is extremely important that the university librarian and the high school librarian work in close collaboration—in their communications as well as in planning course contents. In an article in the fall 1987 issue of *Research Quarterly*, Kathleen Carver noted that the literature “lacks articles describing bibliographic instruction programs cotaught by academic and school librarians.” We will describe here a successful team-teaching experience with an honors English class using a medium-size university library.

Boatwright Memorial Library at the University of Richmond serves an undergraduate population of 2,700 students. Another 2,000 students are enrolled in graduate

programs and evening school. The reference department has a well-established library skills program for college students. Instruction sessions are also offered to campus staff and faculty.

Boatwright Library has long been a favorite resource for high schools in the area. In the last three years, it has offered a total of 20 tours and instruction sessions to advanced placement and honors students from the area’s public schools. For the most part, these have been fairly successful in terms of student interest. However, instructional goals for the sessions have been lacking, or vague at best.

Last winter, a larger than usual honors class was scheduled to visit the university library—two sections of an eleventh-grade English class with 25 students in each. The classroom teacher had a well-developed assignment. From a list of 20th-century American authors, students chose to read one novel. (Since the students would have access to the university’s resources, they were encouraged to select lesser-known authors.) At their own school the only print index available was *Readers’ Guide*. After reading a minimum of 150 pages of literary criticism about the author, the students prepared a precis summarizing the various critical aspects of the work. From the topic explored in the precis, the teacher recommended one narrow aspect that could be successfully researched and presented in a short paper (3-5 pages).

In preparation for the university visit, the two librarians agreed they would offer a tour and instruction

session led by the university librarian, a demonstration of the online catalog, and time for students to explore the resources.

Prior to the visit, the high school librarian distributed a packet of information to every student. Since the students would be introduced to the *Humanities Index and Essay and General Literature Index*, the librarian included a photocopied page from both in the packets. Students were shown how to determine if a specific journal listed in the *Periodicals Holdings List* was indeed held by the university libraries. The packet also contained a brief outline of the Library of Congress classification system. A floor plan of the Boatwright Library was also included, with areas to be visited highlighted.

Since the students would be required to photocopy an article or chapter pertaining to their topic, copy cards issued by the university were secured in advance and sold to pairs of students. Finally, the student heard tips from their librarian on how “not to look like a high school student” while visiting the university.

At the university, instruction in the online catalog was limited to what students needed to know to find materials about their author and his writings. This approach was a key point in not overwhelming the students. The last part of the instruction session repeated the use of the *Humanities Index and Essay and General Literature Index*, as well as the library’s *Periodicals Holdings List*. Students were then given an hour to find the materials.

From the experience we have drawn up a model of collaboration

that we feel will ensure successful college visits:

1. *Schedule.* Begin planning at least two months before the scheduled trip.
2. *Assignment.* Encourage the classroom teacher to develop a specific, focused assignment, preferably one that students have researched in their high school and public libraries prior to their university library visit.
3. *Site Visit.* Visit the university library and review plans and strategies with the university librarian. (Both the classroom teacher and the school librarian should make this visit.)
3. *Team-Teaching Opportunities.* Include opportunities to demonstrate team-teaching by the teacher and the librarians such as pre-visit instruction and support during the instruction phase.
4. *Pre-visit Instruction.* Plan a library

instruction session at the high school library, reviewing sources at the university, goals and objectives for the assignment, policies of the university library, and tips on behavior.

5. *Follow-up Research Time.* Allow at least an hour for students to identify and locate materials useful to their assignment. Librarians and teachers should be available for follow-up questions during this period.

6. *Limited Focus.* Focus on what is relevant and can be grasped and put to use by students immediately. Not everything can be taught about a university library in one visit.



Christine Campbell is the School Librarian at J.R. Tucker High School in Henrico County, Virginia. Lucretia McCulley is the Director of Public Services for the Boatwright Memorial Library of the University of Richmond.