



1989

Catching Diverse Users in the Library Instruction Web

Lucretia McCulley

University of Richmond, lmcculle@richmond.edu

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



Part of the [Information Literacy Commons](#), and the [Scholarly Communication Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

McCulley, Lucretia. "Catching Diverse Users in the Library Instruction Web." *Virginia Librarian* 25, no. 4 (1989): 20-21.

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.

Catching Diverse Users in the Library Instruction Web

Programs for High School Students and Campus Staff

By Lucretia McCulley, Director of Public Services, Boatwright Memorial Library, University of Richmond, Richmond, VA 23173, (804) 289-8670

The 1988 LOEX (Library Orientation and Exchange) Conference challenged our instructional staff to think beyond our traditional instruction program for our university students. With a well-established freshman and upper-class student program, what other groups did we need to focus on? Four librarians from the University of Richmond (UR), including three reference librarians and the Director of Public Services, attended the LOEX Conference in Bowling Green, Ohio in May of 1988. The conference theme was "Reaching and Teaching Diverse Library User Groups" and it concentrated on atypical groups within a college or university community such as international students, high school students, university and college staff, and adult users. Two of these groups were of particular interest to us on the UR campus—the high school student and the administrative/campus staff member.

Boatwright Memorial Library at the University of Richmond serves a predominately undergraduate

population of 2,700 students. Another 2,000 students are enrolled in several small graduate programs, a law school and the University College, the evening school at the university. Since 1975 the General Reference Department has cooperated with the English Department by offering library instruction to their students. This introductory library skills program has gone through several transformations, the most recent in 1987. Now into its third year, the three-tiered library skills program consists of the following components:

1. **Orientation**—a self-paced audiotape walking tour, which introduces students to the physical layout of Boatwright Library and the services provided by its staff. This year's audiotape features the theme of a "web of information" linked closely with the school's mascot, a spider. A colorful poster was designed which shows the UR spider mascot spinning its way through library services and urging others to do the same. The tape is narrated by a local TV sportscaster and graduate of the university. The offices of the Deans of undergraduate students have cooperated by requiring every freshman to take the tour as part of Freshman Orientation.

2. **General Instruction**—A *Library Skills Workbook*, which introduces English 103 (Freshman English) students to basic reference and research materials as well as search strategy in the environment of a college library. Simple exercises allow students to practice their new skills and gain confidence in using library resources.

3. **Specific Instruction**—An instructional session presented in class by a reference librarian who discusses with students appropriate search strategies and special materials for English 103 research papers.

By the end of the semester, English 103 students should have a sound grasp of basic research methods and materials. This knowledge can be expanded through library assignments in other disciplines during subsequent semesters. Reference librarians also offer advanced, course-specific instruction sessions with faculty from any department.

In addition to our freshman program and advanced class instruction, the Reference Department also offers a library methods course, Interdisciplinary 300. The goal of this course is to help students develop research skills, and to gain familiarity with the re-

search tools and literature of their major fields of study. It proves beneficial to juniors and seniors who have selected a major and are better prepared to engage in research in their chosen field.

Although the Reference Department constantly reviews and attempts to improve the above instructional components, we had enough confidence in our established programs to devote some of our energies to other user groups who needed our attention.

Boatwright Library has long been a favorite library for area high school students. In years past, high school students have also been a problem for library staff. Inappropriate behavior was often reported and reference librarians were burdened by well-intentioned, but underprepared high school students trying to use a college library. Soon after the LOEX Conference the reference department decided to take a new approach to dealing with high school students. We would offer revised guidelines and focus our relationship on high school librarians in the area. We also decided to offer tours and instruction sessions to Advanced Placement and Honors students if the high school librarian made arrangements well in advance. We knew these particular students could benefit from our resources, and it would benefit all of us if they received some instruction before using our library. Guidelines were agreed upon and the Director of Public Services visited with all city, county and independent school librarians at their group meetings in the fall of 1988. High school librarians were supportive of the guidelines and were appreciative of our efforts to offer instruction when needed. They also agreed with our efforts to put

the control of their students' use of our resources in their hands. The past year showed a definite improvement in high school use. Behavior problems disappeared and we hosted five successful instructional field trips from area high school Advanced Placement/Honors classes.

In addition to our area high school users, we also decided to focus beyond the traditional student population and entice UR administrative, office and other support personnel to use our resources. Our library had recently undergone remodeling and added a new wing, so it seemed an appropriate time to reintroduce the library to a number of personnel. A flyer was designed which described a two-hour Administrative/Campus Staff workshop on using the library and it was sent to over 400 staff members. Response was overwhelming with nearly 85 staff registering for the workshop. Two additional workshop sessions had to be scheduled to handle the interest.

Attendees were led on a tour, with various library staff members participating along the way. They also received a packet of library guides and a suggested list of ready reference sources that they could use in their job or personal lives. Various hands-on activities with reference sources were offered in the last half hour.

Evaluations were collected from participants and comments included:

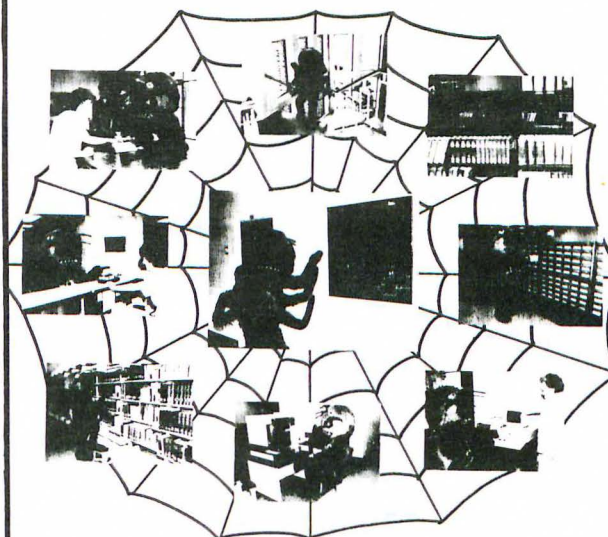
"Everything about the workshop was helpful to me and I also enjoyed meeting the various library staff members...the tour was especially helpful and, I now feel much more comfortable using the library since I know my way around."

"I definitely feel more confident about being able to find something (or ask for help) and I was amazed at all the information that is now available."

"I am one of those people who was always 'afraid' to go into a library I was not familiar with because I didn't want to be a bother to anyone. I feel rather confident now that I could come over and use your facilities with little (but probably some) help. I do appreciate all the effort that went into this."

Due to the success of both the high school guidelines and campus staff workshops in the past year, plans are already underway to continue both programs in the coming academic year. With experience behind us, these new programs do not take up an inordinate amount of staff time and the rewards of our efforts have benefited both users and librarians. We also feel that our trip to Ohio in 1988 was well worth our time since it pushed us to expand our instructional program to reach diverse user groups.

UR Spider Spins a Web of Information Through Boatwright Library



The Boatwright Audiotape Tour is a good start in getting where you want to be in 4 years.

Available at the Circulation and Reference Desks, First Floor, Boatwright Library.