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Linking Secondary School Students with College-Level Resources: Guidelines for Borrowing Privileges and Library Instruction

Lucretia McCulley

ABSTRACT. The Boatwright Library at the University of Richmond has developed a cooperative program with high school librarians to provide service to local high school students. The Library grants limited circulation privileges and offers library instruction for assignments that require university-level library resources. The program has reduced inappropriate library behavior by high school students and may help the University attract additional students. Future plans include closer cooperation with high school librarians.

A 1967 *College and Research Libraries* article on community use of academic libraries reported that "the community group that appears closest to being genuinely unwelcome in American college and university libraries is the high school student segment. . . . Barely restrained emotions on the part of many respondents to our question on high school students indicate a substantial distaste for service to this group."¹ Twenty years later, a 1987 *RQ* article on the use of academic libraries by high school students highlighted several cooperative programs that have emerged, particularly in the last decade.² In many ways, this contrast aptly describes the contemporary academic librarian's dilemma in providing service to this group. Behavior problems, lack of communication between high school and academic libraries, and lack of support from both college/university and public school administrators can contribute to frustra-

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tions found among public service librarians attempting to serve high school students. However, a plan that both shares and controls resources for high school students can benefit all involved. This article will describe a successful cooperative program between a medium-sized university and high schools in the Richmond, Virginia metropolitan area.

Boatwright Library, the main library at the University of Richmond, has long been a favorite library for area high school students. In years past, high school students have been a problem for library staff. Inappropriate behavior was often reported; and reference librarians were also burdened by well-intentioned, but underprepared, high school students trying to use a college library. Having been inspired by a LOEX library instruction conference on serving diverse user groups, the Public Services staff decided to take a new approach to dealing with high school students. Guidelines were revised that encouraged a positive relationship with high school librarians in the area. Earlier efforts to control the use of the library by high school students had focused on teachers and principals, but it was decided that it was time to establish a stronger line of communication with the person who knew our environment the best—the high school librarian.

The guidelines cover two major areas: borrowing privileges and library instruction. (See Appendix A.) In our efforts to both share and control resources, it was decided to emphasize our program for Advanced Placement and Honors students. These particular students could benefit from the university's resources, and it would benefit the library and the university if they were offered the opportunity to use the library and receive library instruction. The Director of Public Services visited all city, county, and independent school librarians to discuss the guidelines. High school librarians were very receptive to them and were appreciative of the opportunity for library tours and instruction. They also agreed with our efforts to put the control of their students' use of our resources into their hands. Subsequent communication with the high school librarians has continued through memorandums, individual meetings, and telephone conversations. The past three years have shown a definite improvement in high school student use. Behavior problems, for the most part, have disappeared; and Boatwright Library has hosted 20 library instruction tour/sessions from area high school Advanced Placement/Honors classes.

CIRCULATION PRIVILEGES

Many academic librarians are concerned about losing their resources to high school students. This has not been a problem with our program. In

the last three years, the library has lost less than five books to this group of special borrowers. The guidelines allow students to check out 2 books at a time with a valid pass issued and signed by the high school librarian. (See Appendix B.) British and American literature materials do not circulate at all; however, students may use these materials in the library. The high school or school system must replace materials if students do not return them or are unable to pay for them. All high schools or school systems have agreed to this stipulation except for Richmond City Schools, who could not fund such replacements. Because of this, we have very few students from the city system using the university library. Most students are from the independent school sector, of which there are many, or from surrounding county school systems. Students are encouraged to obtain a pass from their librarian any time they want to use the library. At the entrance to the university library, the high school students are asked to register their name and high school. A large sign states these requirements. It is, however, difficult to enforce this rule without a door checker. Library staff also ask students if they have registered. This registration procedure provides us with rough statistics on how many students are using our library as well as adding a reinforcement for positive behavior by the high school students. Because they know we may have their name and school, they are inclined to behave better.

LIBRARY INSTRUCTION

The guidelines state that library instruction is strongly encouraged before a high school student uses the university library. We encourage AP/Honors classes to schedule a tour/instruction session if a classroom teacher makes an assignment that requires the use of the university library's resources. In reality, this guideline does not work perfectly, mostly due to lack of communication between classroom teachers and high school librarians regarding assignments that require college library resources. However, the tours and instruction sessions that have been hosted have been very successful. A typical session is arranged by the high school librarian with the Director of Public Services. Communication then takes place between the high school librarian, classroom teacher, and university reference librarian regarding the assignment and specifics of the trip. Tours/instruction sessions are given at any time except during the last 5-6 weeks of fall and spring semesters. Thirty students is the limit on group size. Upon arriving at the university library, two reference librarians give a brief tour of the library. They highlight services such as Circulation and Reference and explain how to use Library of Congress classification. Then one librarian usually gives a group instruction session of 30 minutes,

which can include a demonstration of the university's online catalog and instruction on reference tools for the students' specific assignment. Instruction is kept simple, brief, and focused.

ADVANTAGES OF UNIVERSITY AND HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY COOPERATION

As a private institution, the University of Richmond is not under public mandate to serve high school students, but we have done so as part of university community relations and of the library's goal and commitment to state and national networking. By serving Advanced Placement/Honors students, we are providing resources to a group of students who need the materials; and we are helping prepare them to use any type of college or university library they may encounter. Some visiting groups have also visited the university's admissions office. This may therefore help provide future students for the university. The revised guidelines have also made service to high school students a more workable and rewarding experience for the university's public services staff.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER COOPERATION

Advanced technology and state-wide efforts to network will probably improve the cooperation that now exists. Possibilities include the capability of high school librarians to dial into the university's catalog and to request materials through interlibrary loan. Funding, of course, would have to be provided for additional interlibrary loan and staff costs. Closer ties still need to be developed between university and high school librarians. Site visits to both high schools and university libraries should be required for all librarians involved in the program. Opportunities for team-teaching by the high school and university librarian should be supported and developed. Classroom teachers also need to have opportunities to visit academic libraries and to learn how to use them effectively with their assignments for high school students.

REFERENCES

1. Quick, Richard C. "Community Use-Dealer's Choice," *College and Research Libraries*, May, 1967, pp. 187-88.
2. Carver, Kathleen W. "Use of Academic Libraries by High School Students: Implications for Research," *RQ*, Fall 1987, p. 57.

APPENDIX A

GUIDELINES
FOR
HIGH SCHOOL USE OF BOATWRIGHT LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

1. High School student use should be limited to those students enrolled in Advanced Placement or Honors classes whose assignments require the use of college-level library resources.

Boatwright Reference Librarians are willing to provide a library instruction session and tour for AP/Honors classes if requested by the high school librarian. Boatwright librarians need at least two weeks notice for requests and accommodation of the request will be determined in consideration of the University's library instruction program. Classes should not arrive unannounced.

2. Individual use of Boatwright Library should be discouraged unless the student has received instruction on how to use Boatwright from an AP/Honors library instruction session or the high school librarian. High School students should be encouraged to use their high school and public libraries before approaching Boatwright Library.

3. If individual use is warranted, students must have a signed permission slip from the high school librarian to *visit* Boatwright Library. High school students must present the slip at the Circulation Desk and register their name and school. The permission slip must be issued by the high school librarian each time a student visits Boatwright Library.

4. Borrowing privileges:

PLEASE NOTE:

If you want to allow your students to check out library materials, your respective school is responsible for these materials if they are not returned or if fines are not paid. An overdue notice will be sent to the school's librarian to follow through with their students. We will bill on the first and the fifteenth of each month for outstanding library violations.

- Students must have signed permission slip from the school librarian.
- Limit of two books.
- No renewals.
- British and American literature books do not circulate.

5. All area high school students should be told that Boatwright Library is not a social gathering place and is to be used only for serious research based on the above guidelines.

6. High School libraries should continue to analyze the collections of the local school library to determine how well they support the curriculum.

Is there an adequate supply of literary criticism available? Are specialized indexes, such as *Humanities Index*, etc., available? How available is the school library? Are the hours adequate?

PLEASE DIRECT QUESTIONS CONCERNING THESE GUIDELINES TO LUCRETIA McCULLEY, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SERVICES, BOATWRIGHT LIBRARY. 289-8670

APPENDIX B

PLEASE CREATE PERMISSION CARDS IF STUDENTS NEED TO VISIT
BOATWRIGHT LIBRARY ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS OR CHECK OUT TWO BOOKS.
SAMPLES ARE PROVIDED BELOW.

Sample Permission Card
Visit to UR

University of Richmond
High School Permission Card

NAME OF SCHOOL

School Address _____

School Phone Number _____ Date _____

Student's Name _____

Student's Address _____

School Librarian's Signature

Permit valid for visit to UR Library

APPENDIX B (continued)

Sample Permission Card
Visit to UR and Loan of 2 books

University of Richmond
High School Permission Card

NAME OF SCHOOL

School Address _____

School Phone Number _____

Date _____

Student's Name _____

Student's Address _____

School Librarian's Signature

Permit valid for visit to UR Library and for
loan of two books with no renewals.