

## Lesson 6 Discussion Post

1. This week's readings and lecture notes deal with faculty culture and faculty-librarian collaboration, which are relevant in an academic environment. What from these readings can be applied to other library environments? How might these concepts be adapted so as to be useful in a public library or another type of library?
2. Several of the articles this week reveal misunderstandings among groups of people (between librarians and faculty members, between faculty members and undergraduates, etc.). Jacobs describes a successful collaboration, and I mentioned other ways to improve the chances of collaboration in our lecture notes for this week. What other methods can you envision to improve the relationships and collaboration between faculty members and librarians?
3. The readings this week discuss faculty-librarian collaboration and course-integrated information literacy instruction. In addition to those that I listed in the lecture notes, what are other advantages or disadvantages of course-integrated information literacy instruction?
4. Respond to any other ideas that struck you in the readings for this week.

Because my goal is to become an academic librarian one day, the articles in this lesson, which focus on how to encourage faculty and librarian partnerships and course-integrated information literacy instruction, were very interesting. I was especially surprised that some of the articles that were published in the 1990s were still relevant today in 2011. I found that Leckie (1996) accurately depicts the gap in awareness between brand-new college students and those veterans of the academy, the faculty. It is not that instructors do not care whether or not their students succeed, but Leckie describes the differences between 19-year-olds students' approach to research and that of subject specialists as a difference in research "maturity."

Undergraduates, particularly in the lower years, are exposed to certain disciplines for the first time. This exposure frequently consists of textbook, reserve materials, and lectures. The students have no sense of who might be important in a particular field, and find it difficult to build and follow a citation trail. They do not have the benefit of knowing anyone who actually does research in the discipline (except for their professor) and so do not have a notion of something as intangible as the informal scholarly network. Because of their level of cognitive development, ambiguity and non-linearity may be quite threatening. They do not think in terms of an information-thinking strategy. Research is conceptualized as a fuzzy library-based activity which is required of them to complete their coursework. (Leckie, 1996, p. 202-203)

This certainly depicts my first year in college. Because no one in my family had attended college, I knew nothing of academia, so I did experience a transition from high school/family life to the full time university student life. While I did well in my classes, I always felt like there was a kind of fog I couldn't quite get through. Professors would mention names as though the students personally knew who or whose work the professors were discussing, and I would try to

catch these brief snippets in frustration. Wouldn't it have been better if professors had included the names of pivotal researchers and a few foundational articles or journals in the subject area over the course of the class so as to aid our introduction to the field? It would have been helpful if professors had explained their own research interests, how they keep up with the literature, and how students at our level should approach a paper. There certainly would have been less cloudiness.

Academic librarians are constantly trying to find ways to reach out to students on campus, but, shouldn't we also focus on reaching out to faculty in order to help students? In this week's lecture notes, Dr. Simmons mentions that one way academic librarians can "infiltrate" the faculty culture is to "[o]ffer faculty-only workshops or individual tutorials to provide instruction on particular databases or other library tools" (Simmons, 2011). While it is important to share with instructors about the kinds of things we can teach their students, too often we place most of the emphasis on library tools, resources, and strategies, we can also instruct faculty on how students actually approach research. The information Leckie provides in her article would make for an outstanding workshop that librarians could present to faculty members. In an earlier lesson, we read an article by Jackson (2007), "Cognitive Development: The Missing Link in Teaching Information Literacy Skills," that also addresses young college students' cognitive difficulty in dealing with the "ambiguity and non-linearity" involved with research. This could also be a helpful article to point faculty members to.

Jackson, R. (2006). Cognitive development: The missing link in teaching informational literacy skills. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 46(4), 28-32.

Leckie, G. (1996). Desperately seeking citations: Uncovering faculty assumptions about the undergraduate research process. *Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 22(3), 201-208.

Simmons, M.H. (2011). *Lecture-lesson-6*. [PDF document].

Unfortunately, this expert model does not work well when applied to novices (i.e., undergraduates), who most often have none of these characteristics. Undergraduates, particularly in the lower years, are exposed to certain disciplines for the first time. This exposure frequently consists of a textbook, reserve materials, and lectures. The students have no sense of who might be important in a particular field, and find it difficult to build and follow a citation trail. They do not have the benefit of knowing anyone who actually does research in the discipline (except for their professor) and so do not have a notion of something as intangible as the informal scholarly network. They have never attended a scholarly conference. Because of their level of cognitive development, ambiguity and non-linearity may be quite threatening.<sup>7</sup> They do not think in terms of an information-seeking strategy, but rather in terms of a coping strategy.