The Link
Rentschler Library Faculty Newsletter. Spring 2009

engage| explore | inform| innovate | seek |discover| inspire | preserve | create | support | communicate| imagine |transform

"I don't really need to learn this—I'm only going to college to get a job."

Those exact words were spoken by a student seeking research assistance at the library, and it's a sentiment likely echoed by many on campus. Convincing these students to become fully engaged in the learning process may be difficult, but it may also be necessary if they are going to be competitive in the job market after graduation. In fact, what they learn in college may be what distinguishes them from other job applicants.

Reluctant learners need to start by dismissing the myth that "D is for Degree". According to Careerbuilder.com, 70% of hiring managers DO screen applicants based on their GPA. While 3.0 is the common cutoff, a higher GPA may help land the interview when other factors seem equal (http://tiny.cc/9GUIK)

During the hiring process, candidates can edge out the competition by emphasizing the skills they honed in college. When an outplacement firm asked 100 Human Resources Executives what skills entry level job seekers lack the most, nearly half cited "writing skills", and 27% listed "critical thinking skills" (*New York Times*, August 2007 http://tiny.cc/u6wPe).

Many students underestimate how much writing they will do daily in their careers. They may not write research papers, but almost every job demands the ability to communicate professionally. They may be writing incident reports, product appraisals, or staff memos. They will almost certainly be writing emails. One thing is certain—no employer wants bad text-messaging habits creeping into professional communications.

What about the 27% with poor critical thinking skills? Conducting research, analyzing concepts, and evaluating information are all practical exercises for improving critical thinking skills. Talk to a librarian about ways to improve your class's "information literacy"; it may help students get that job later.

Information Literacy
The ability to know when there is a need for information; to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand.

Library Instruction Gains in Popularity

Library instruction sessions are the main way we can integrate information literacy into your classes, and more faculty are taking advantage of our growing program than ever before. In the 2008-2009 year, Rentschler Librarians conducted 112 library instruction sessions for 1,816 students in MUH classes. That's up 9% from 103 sessions during the 2007-2008 school year (1,673 students)! Through these classes, we help students improve their information literacy skills by demonstrating how to locate resources, refine search strategies, and evaluate online materials. Many of our sessions are for the English composition classes, but we also provide instruction for classes in history, early childhood education, kinesiology, geography, sociology, English literature, and the Bachelor in Integrative Studies (BIS). Whatever you teach, we can tailor a session to fit your needs.

If you are teaching on campus this summer, librarians will be available to do library instruction sessions for your classes. We will also host a Library Instruction Open House in August to demonstrate what we can do for your students. Please keep an eye out for an announcement of the date/time. You can also contact Mark Shores at shoresml@muohio.edu for more information, and/or to schedule a library instruction session for your class.

Staff News

Kim Taylor earned an Associate in Arts, majoring in Business. Congratulations, Kim!

Mark Shores presented the faculty workshop, "Keeping Up—RSS and other Current Awareness Technology" on April 24th.

Library News

New Security Gates were installed on April 23rd, so you may be surprised to hear alarms sounding when you walk *into* the library with your books. Please be assured that this will only be an issue while the library transitions to desensitizing and sensitizing all of its items in a manner compatible with the new gates.

Coming Soon...

ENJOY this Summer: Need to rejuvenate? On a budget? Take advantage of the library to fill your recreational reading needs. We'll be sponsoring an exciting Summer Reading Program to facilitate appreciation of —and conversation about—our contemporary fiction collection. Look for details in upcoming emails and promotional materials!

LibGuides: This summer, the main University Libraries Website will be refashioning its "Research by Subject" pages using LibGuides software. In addition to having more visual appeal, the LibGuides pages enable Subject Librarians to suggest discipline-specific resources in a variety of formats, including: databases, library print materials, online sources of primary content, and multimedia. The "nesting" abilities of the software will also make it possible to create and link to guides for specific course sections.
Get a sneak peak at http://libguides.lib.muohio.edu .

Library Follows National Trend

Critics have long predicted the "inevitable" demise of libraries and branded them "irrelevant" in an age of online information. Contrary to predictions, library usage across the nation has increased this past year. The naysayers failed to consider two points: users need to actually *have* Internet access, and they also need help sorting through the plethora of information available online.

In these difficult economic times, many are relying upon libraries for Internet access they can no longer afford at home—access desperately needed for job searching. Circulation statistics show that new users are discovering the joy of reading, rather than spending money on recreational activities. Even die-hard bibliophiles are going to the library, rather than spending money on bookstore copies.

Rentschler Library saw similar usage increases over the 2008-2009 academic year. For example, there were 4681 visits to the library in March 2008, but 5250 visits in March 2009: a 12.1% increase in traffic. We would like to thank each of you for your patronage, and for making us your destination for discovery.

Month	# of Visits
August	2979
September	7630
October	7853
November	5368
December	4238
January	3714
February	5797
March	5250
Total :	42,829

April Creates Opportunities for Connections and Collaboration

This year's "Favorite Poem Project" was a stunning success, with 51 readers at the Wilks event (82 in attendance) and 37 readers at Miami Downtown (62 attendees). While the English Department and Library staff spearheaded the effort, faculty from many departments stepped courageously to the podium to share their own favorite poems .

Students and faculty also had a great time completing the "Amazing Race Geography Quiz" for Rentschler Library's table at the MUH Spring Fling. Sixty-nine visitors tried to answer all ten correctly. Try your luck at: http://tiny.cc/j4Y1I (click "Take This Quiz").