



The Link

Rentschler Library Faculty Newsletter. Fall 2009

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

You Say “Potato”, and I Say “Potahto”. They Hear “French Fries”. *The Semantics of Writing an Effective Research Assignment.*



No matter how hard you try to clarify what types of resources are required for your class’s research assignment, it’s inevitable that there will be some confusion for

students. While part of this can be blamed on not reading the assignment thoroughly, misunderstandings can also arise from using terminology that the students define differently.

For example, most instructors will agree that articles from peer-reviewed journals that are accessed through the library’s databases are acceptable resources. However, if the assignment prohibits use of Internet, web, or online sources, some students assume this means that all resources accessed via computer are unacceptable—including library databases. On the flip side, if the assignment clearly states that library resources are acceptable, some students will inevitably cite information from Internet sites that are linked to from the library’s website. Similarly, if an assignment calls for “print sources only”, students may have difficulty obtaining the hard copy of journals since many of the library’s subscriptions are only available in e-journal format.

One possible alternative is to require resources that have a corresponding print version. This makes newspaper articles, journals, and e-books all acceptable, even though the students may access them via computer. Another option is to specifically state

what types of resources are *not* allowed (i.e. Wikipedia), then show students how to actually get to the types of resources that are permitted. Helping them build their Internet evaluation skills by demonstrating good and bad websites can also improve the quality of Internet sources they retrieve.

Part of the problem is that many students do not have the research experience needed to differentiate between types of online sources this early in their academic career, but they may also not be familiar with terms like “database”, “catalog”, or “scholarly”. Problems can be compounded when students learn different meanings for terms used in other classes. For example, a student in a Literature class may learn that his primary source is his main one and his secondary sources support it, whereas primary and secondary resources have a completely different meaning for History students.

Many students express frustration at the limits on types of resources that are allowed; making sure they understand what is required, the differences between those types of resources, and showing them how to get to “the good stuff” can go a long way alleviating that frustration. It may also reduce a bit of your own frustration when it’s time to start grading.

Library Instruction

Rentschler Librarians can help your class improve Internet evaluation skills, differentiate between scholarly and popular journals, and provide students with search strategies to improve their college research skills.



Library Website gets over 25,000 hits* during Fall Semester. See what the fuss is about:

www.ham.muohio.edu/library

*Total hits include library staff usage

Library Collaborates with Faculty To Promote Campus Activities

Whether promoting the screening of Brad Ricca's independent film *Only Son* or spotlighting a student led discussion of Somaly Mam's book, *The Road of Lost Innocence* during Human Rights & Social Justice week, Rentschler Library collaborates with faculty to link the MUH community to suggested resources for continued learning.

Physical displays provide library users with information about the upcoming event, while also guiding them to relevant books. Online, promotions and resources are spotlighted from the library's homepage, blog, and facebook account. Considering our blog averages 365 hits per day and had 789 visits on its busiest day (weekends bring down the average), and our facebook page has 206 fans, our online presence has a ready audience for promotions.

Rentschler Library would like to thank Katie Kickel and Theresa Kulbaga for helping us get involved.



Rentschler Library's Human Rights & Social Justice Display featured Somaly Mam's *The Road of Lost Innocence* and selected HR/SJ titles.

Staff News

Krista McDonald returned to work on November 2nd, after taking leave to care for her new twin boys, Kyle (L) and Ian (R). The boys turned 7 months on December 5th.



Mark Shores presented the "Resume Review: Brush up your Image!" workshop with April Ritchie and Susan Banks at Southwest Ohio and Neighboring Libraries (SWON) and for students at the UK School of Library & Information Science in Lexington. Mark also attended the Academic Library Association of Ohio's (ALAO) Annual Conference.

Kim Taylor and **Gayle Riley** attended the SWON Conference in October.

Kathleen Pickens-French attended the International Lilly Conference on College Teaching.

Library News

Library Instruction: Rentschler Librarians conducted 81 library instruction sessions during Fall semester, reaching a total of 1519 students. If you are considering using library instruction Spring semester, please remember to contact us early so that your preferred dates/times are available. For more information or to schedule a session online, please visit our website at:

www.ham.muohio.edu/library/facultyinstruction.

Holiday Hours: Rentschler Library will be open from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday during the Winter Intercession. The library will be completely closed from December 24th through January 3rd. Please see our website for a complete listing of hours.

Looking for something to do during Winter Break?

Whether you're secretly dying to read the latest fiction bestseller, wanting to catch up on world politics, or needing to get some motivating self-help before the New Year kicks in, Rentschler Library has a selection of new books that will keep you turning pages throughout the break. Go ahead and **indulge**—read the Twilight series, some David Baldacci, or Janet Evanovich. Go ahead and **help yourself**—find some new recipes, start doing Yoga, or get in shape with strength training. Go ahead and **learn a little**—read about globalization, human rights, or the world economy. Go ahead and **splurge**—you get unlimited checkouts and the books are all free.