Library Research Paper Assignment Workshop

When you request a library session, we will follow up with an Outlook meeting request for the date and time, and a suggested lesson plan and handouts. Collaboration with faculty guides the approach and content in Library instruction classes. For this purpose, we ask that you share your preferences for databases, ideas to support your students, and provide a copy of the research assignment. If you have had any assignments designed to prepare students for writing a research paper, we ask for those as well. Librarians can refer to prior class assignments and use search terms and examples in context to reinforce and build understanding.

Workshop Goals

1. Planning with the understanding that research paper assignments are learning assignments of multiple tasks with an upcoming due date.
2. Searching using library databases – search terms, limiters, publications, results list, search for books, circulating and reference
3. Organizing research with databases tools for email, printing, and citation, and saving search terms and notes about articles.
4. Collaboration, meeting with a professor, librarian, peer tutor or classmate to talk about research, citation, and writing.

Lesson Plan

Planning Research:

Prior to the class, share the handout with the professor to get it posted on the class BB page or send via email so it can be used when practicing searching. * see note on Starfish

Brief discussion of using the assignment for planning. For example: the skill of planning is to take a big assignment and make it into tasks that you can complete between the start date and the due date.

- **Length of paper**—does the assignment call for a set number of pages or word count.
- **Citation style** – MLA, APA, or other? Know the citation style from the start.
- **Search strategy** how many and what kind of sources and what type are required, for example, articles, scholarly, peer-reviewed, journalistic, books, EBooks, websites, for example, gov, .edu, .org.
- **Timeline** - Start date through completion date. Make a schedule for the tasks of the research process and start as soon as possible.

Searching Databases

Demonstration and discussion of the A-Z list databases with focus on reference sources for background information.

Background information gathering is the first task. Background research is the method to discover and organize terms and concepts that distinguish between a broad topic and focused issues to outline a paper and to consider analysis or argument as the form for their paper.

The library offers credible sources to gather background information, Credo, CQ Researcher. Background research builds from sources that summarize or outline the main issues that inform the discussion and argument of a researchable topic. The task of background research is to develop an understanding and a vocabulary on the topic from at least two sources. Ask the fundamental questions: Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How. A proven technique of research is to build on what you already know about the topic by asking and answering
fundamental research questions. This process identifies the main points, debates, theories, data, and people that show up as issues among two or more sources. Knowing the background can prepare students with the information needed to form keyword searches to search in library databases for peer-reviewed and scholarly articles, or reports and articles from government, educational, and non-profit informational sources.

*Distribute the Organizing and Documenting Research Handout*

Discuss using a Word document to organize searches.

**Recap discussion of tasks to complete a research paper successfully.**

1. **Searching for background information for exploration and definition of topic.** Background information summarizes and answers the questions, who, what, when, where, why, and how; these are the points that explain and expand understanding of the topic. These points become the list of words to use when searching for scholarly articles. More search terms gives more article choices.
   a. For example search for background information using the word “poverty” from the background information discover terms like “poverty threshold,” or “working poor,” or find events, places, populations, theories that reveal the discourse of topic.
2. **Research--searching and finding** (using the list from background information) the number and types, of sources required to further develop the discussion with facts and data.
3. **Organize to cite and write--create a citation for each article in the style required by your assignment.** Make notes on how the article supports your understanding of the topic using the Organizing and Documenting Research handout. *
4. **Rough draft**
5. **Completed research paper**

The last 20 minutes of the class will be a hands-on workshop searching Credo and CQ Researcher for background information.

**Options:**
Exit ticket: Students will email geneva.jewell@kctcs.edu one background source citation and a list of search terms for their topic.

*If the Organizing and Documenting Research Handout is not in the class Blackboard page: in Starfish download a class roster of email addresses (add the instructor’s email). Send the email shortly before the class meets and direct the students to open their email and open the document and their assignment and discuss and add the dates and tasks to the form). Alternatively, the librarian can pass out a copy of the handout in class.*