Students struggle with the research process

Librarians meet individually with students as a required part of a research assignment

While many students are proficient at searching the Internet and locating online resources for their research papers, they aren’t always successful at navigating the better research resources that are available through the Rohrbach Library. Realizing that not all students are experienced with quality academic research, some KU professors have found a solution by requiring students to meet with librarians as part of the research assignment.

English professor, Dr. Amy Lynch-Biniek, requires all of her ENG 023 students to get help from librarians while writing proposals and keeping a research blog, with the future intention of a research paper. Within a two week period, Dr. Lynch-Biniek requires students to meet with a KU librarian at least once. This breaks the barrier of not knowing who to go to for help, or how to ask for it. “I describe librarians as

By Danielle Gentile, Library PR Intern
the best resource on campus that they may not be using,” explains Dr. Lynch-Biniek. “Scholars, researchers, and professionals often reach out to librarians for assistance, so why should an undergraduate try to do it alone?”

Students are expected to sit down with a librarian, and learn how to use higher-quality databases. This opens a larger variety of sources to the students and also the possibility of multiple directions in which a topic can transform. “I’ve had students return to me after a library visit and ask if they can alter their topic, and not because they couldn’t find anything”, explains Dr. Lynch-Biniek, “The librarian helped them uncover a new avenue of research, new questions to ask.” The Librarians help students find the information they may not have realized they needed.

Professor Margaux Griffith sends her students to Kutztown’s librarians for her “Evaluation of the Evolution of a Marketing Campaign” assignment. While researching and assessing how well a company has marketed and continues to market to its customers, students make an evaluation of the strategies companies use for long-term success.

Professor Griffith, noticed her students struggling with the research aspect of the assignment, so she holds a conference week where students visit librarians for assistance. “I think this covers a lot of individual guidance and discussion about an assignment that students are already nervous about,” explains Griffith. She feels that student response to her conference week have been positive overall. Students tend to enjoy the individual aspect, as some even continue to visit the library for help post conference week.

Any student can access help from a librarian on Monday-Thursday 10am-8pm, Friday 9am-4pm, and Sunday 2pm-8pm. Students ask for a librarian at the Information Desk on the first floor, and the librarian on call will meet them there.

Students should bring their assignments, questions they have, as well as a signature form if required by professor. Faculty members who would like to try a librarian consultation requirement as part of an assignment or who would like to have a librarian speak to a class can contact Krista Prock, information literacy librarian, at prock@kutztown.edu.

“I describe librarians as the best resource on campus that (students) may not be using. Scholars, researchers, and professionals often reach out to librarians for assistance, so why should an undergraduate try to do it alone?”
Are you looking to incorporate Hollywood feature films in your classes without asking students to use Netflix or Amazon? The library is pleased to announce a new partnership with Swank Motion Pictures that makes most of these films available to faculty for academic use.

The library has purchased a 73-title license allowing faculty to pick and choose films to be made available via the Swank Digital Campus platform. Our license allows individual and classroom viewing of films but no public performances.

Films can be viewed directly on the Swank Digital Campus platform, shared via email, linked or embedded in D2L, or posted to a blog or website. Students will need to login with their KU credentials to view (just like with any other library database).

Dr. Vogel uses Swank with his ENG 129 jazz culture class. Swank allows students to watch films at their own convenience and saves him class time. He has them watch the movie at home, take a brief content quiz on D2L, answer discussion questions, and participate in a group class discussion. Overall, his experience has been positive, but there were a few issues, such as the fluidity of the streaming, some glitches when rewinding to a previous clip, and a few login problems. Dr. Vogel still said it was a great tool and more students were engaged with the films. He will use the streaming service about 4 times this semester and will later integrate extra credit assignments using Swank.

He said that it helped turn film into a text by making it more easily accessible.

Elsewhere in the English department, Dr. Weedman uses films and readings throughout the semester in a majority of the courses he teaches. Right now, he is using the service in his ENG 141 course. When he first started teaching here, about 3 years ago, he tried to show outside screenings for students
to view the required films, but because this was outside of class time, he could not make them mandatory. He then had to require students to purchase a $20 Amazon gift card to use to rent films throughout the semester. He also used money out of his own pocket to purchase each film and then put them on reserve at the library in case someone could not afford the Amazon rentals. He said Netflix and Hulu were not beneficial to him because they did not have the films he needed. Swank works great with his courses because they offer a lot of classical films.

His students read classical novels first and then view the films after. He noticed that in the discussions with his students, they are actually watching the films now. He did not have any issues to report from his 30 students who used the service this week. He mentioned that some professors have remarked that there was a lack of international films and documentaries. He said that any professor who uses films in their class or addresses social issues would benefit from using this service. He also said it could be a great extra credit assignment. Swank Motion Pictures is the nontheatrical distributor for the majority of the major Hollywood studios such as Miramax, Touchstone, Warner Bros, and Paramount as well as many independent, foreign, art house, and documentary offerings. To search available films go to: http://www.swank.com/digitalcampus. To request a film be added to our collection fill out this form or email Bob Flatley at flatley@kutztown.edu. Films can take up to 10 days to be added to the platform. To learn more about this new service visit the library’s information page at http://library.kutztown.edu/swankdigital.

INSTRUCTOR CHALLENGE

Elementary education majors need to create quality text sets for teaching social studies, but they struggle to understand the concept of text sets and how to select the best materials.

By Karen Wanamaker, Librarian

On January 27, 2015, librarian Karen Wanamaker again teamed with elementary education professor Dr. Angel Bestwick for their 5th book tasting in the Curriculum Materials Center classroom in the Rohrbach Library. Wanamaker and Bestwick created this event as a way to share quality children’s literature, the concept of text sets, and national social studies standards with students taking the elementary social studies course. Each semester, they turn RL22 into the “For the Love of Books Café” for the event, and they
select and display approximately 300 titles in text sets around the room that are based on the ten themes of the National Council of the Social Studies. Students receive a book tasting menu with directions and space to fill in their thoughts about how they can use the books in a classroom. The professors have been researching this inquiry-based instructional method along the way, particularly noting how the event influences students’ attitudes toward and knowledge of applicable social studies children’s literature, and they have presented their work at both statewide and national conferences.