

Final Summary
Faculty Development Grant
Dr. Richard Swanson, Religion Department
Jan Brue Enright, Mikkelsen Library

During the spring semester of 2006, Ms. Enright has visited Dr. Swanson's class, *Religion 218: Hope and a Future* several times. There are 18 undergraduate students enrolled in this class. During her first visit, Jan outlined a number of library resources that might serve students well as they begin the research for their lengthy annotated bibliography.

Two weeks later Jan returned to the class for follow-up questions. At the beginning of the session, she passed out index cards, asking students to reflect on one thing that they had learned during the previous session, and on the flip side to name one "muddy" or unclear point.

Responses on the new information mostly named databases that had been discussed (ATLA Religion, New York Times Historical, Lexis Nexis). Several students also mentioned the interlibrary loan service that the library provides.

A sample of responses to this query:

- "I learned about the New York Times online and that has been very helpful to my project."
- "You can get books from a library other than ours."
- "It was nice to learn about some of the other databases that I was not familiar with. The only one that I knew about before was ProQuest. Also helpful search techniques."

In the responses about what was unclear, several students mentioned they were struggling with homing in on a topic. Some students asked for reminders on how to log in to databases from off-campus, and how to compose an annotated bibliography.

A sample of responses to this query:

- "I am still unclear about narrowing down my project but I guess that is up to me--or I can luckily come across the help of an article."
- "Picking out key words and descriptions---never seems to work for me."
- "Still unsure about NetLibrary—how to check out books, for how long, how often, etc."

Jan addressed most of these issues during that class session, and followed up with further discussion on how to approach a research project of this magnitude. Students were reminded of the services the library provides, including reference appointments, interlibrary loan, off-campus access to databases, and a quiet place to study.

In early April Dr. Swanson scheduled groups of three or four students to talk about the research process. Jan sat in on each of these sessions to provide feedback and also note where students may need further assistance with their research.

In this small group setting, Dr. Swanson was able to give direct explanations as to what he expected in an annotated bibliography. Similar questions were posed by students: How long should my bibliography be? What should it look like? Am I on the right track? How should I cite an interview? Dr. Swanson's consistent explanation of what "core sources" are seemed to ease the anxiety of several students. Students were also asked how their research was progressing. Some students had a concrete question or observation and Jan was able to give advice and to assist. Students were again reminded to utilize the library and its staff for this project.

At the end of the semester students will present their projects in class and Jan will be in attendance for those presentations.

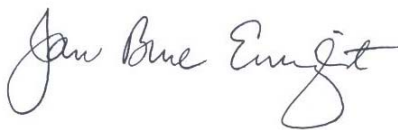
Conclusion:

Dr. Swanson has taught this class for a number of years and has observed a certain level of research that most students complete. We are very interested to see if the quality of research improves with this information literacy emphasis.

- Have students become more or less likely to consult with a librarian?
- More or less likely to use dependable library resources?
- More or less likely to use critical thinking in evaluating their topic?

Swanson and Enright plan to continue this partnership in 2007 with some possible adjustments made, depending on the outcome of 2006.

Respectfully submitted,



Richard Swanson
Jan Brue Enright

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