**Session Title:** Implementing a Consistent, Customizable Library Session for First Year Experience Classes at Southern Connecticut State University

**Biographical Sketch:** Wendy Hardenberg received a dual Master of Library Science/Master of Arts in Comparative Literature from Indiana University Bloomington in 2008. She then spent three years as the Humanities Librarian for Mansfield University of Pennsylvania's North Hall Library before moving to Southern Connecticut State University's Hilton C. Buley Library in 2011. She currently serves as the Instruction Coordinator and First Year Experience Librarian.

**Session Abstract:** In order to balance first year students' need for basic library knowledge with faculty members' need for academic freedom, a consistent but customizable library assignment and session was created for all sections of SCSU’s INQ 101 class. The assignment is grounded in ACRL's Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, the session designed to give students personal attention in a classroom setting, and the faculty approached individually to align student research with other class activities.

**Evidence of Assessment:** The Fall 2011 semester was the pilot semester for the new INQ 101 library assignment and session, so assessment has played a very important role. Assessment activities include: 1) surveying INQ 101 faculty members at the end of the semester, both those who agreed to the new assignment and session and those who did not; 2) informal discussion among the librarians who led the new sessions to determine strengths and weaknesses and methods of improvement for the Spring 2012 semester; 3) comparison of general FYE program assessment data with student participation vs. non-participation in the new library session; 4) implementation of a “minute paper”-style Library Session Evaluation to be completed by students at the end of each session.

**Detailed Summary:** The First Year Experience Program at Southern Connecticut State University is in its fifth year of existence and gaining momentum. The INQ 101: Intellectual and Creative Inquiry class is required for all first time college students and represents a cornerstone of the program. Although there is some content common to all sections, the expertise of the faculty members determines class goals and activities to a large extent. This freedom can have a negative impact on consistency of content for any library visits the different sections make, and it can also create an untenable workload for librarians if all 62 sections come to the library (which would be optimal) with radically different assignments. In order to balance first year students' need for basic library knowledge with faculty members' need

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for academic freedom, a consistent but customizable INQ 101 library assignment and session was developed.

The assignment is in line with the Association of College and Research Libraries’ Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education, with brief activities designed to raise students’ awareness of library resources, increase their facility with using those resources, and oblige them to reflect on their research as they conduct it. The research culminates in either a short essay, an annotated bibliography, or a citation exercise, for which the faculty member requesting the session chooses the topic, and thus the library assignment can either serve as preliminary work for another assignment or as a stand-alone exercise.

After a very brief physical tour highlighting the difference between the reference and circulation desks, a quick check that students know how to log into their library accounts from off-campus, and the display of an infographic showing how much information cannot be found through Google, the rest of the class period (usually either 40 minutes or an hour) is devoted to students working on the library assignment on their own with the help of a LibGuide created for that purpose. Students are able to work at their own pace, ask for help when they need it, collaborate with their peers, and take mini field trips into the stacks to find books.

All faculty who opted to bring their students in for this session either initiated contact or were first contacted via mass email. They all subsequently met individually with the Instruction Coordinator to learn about the new session and assignment and to customize it to their needs.

Assessment data has been compared with previous years and participants vs. non-participants.

Implications for Institutional Improvement: The transition from a small public or school library (or no library experience at all) to a university library can be overwhelming for first year students. Even those who knew their way around their hometown public library can be thrown off by a much larger multi-story building or by the discovery that the Library of Congress call number system has replaced the familiar Dewey Decimal System. Ensuring that all first year students get the same basic introduction to the library is beneficial for both students and faculty; students find themselves better prepared to meet faculty expectations, which increases their confidence and reduces frustration, and faculty teaching upper level classes can be more confident about the extent to which their students are already

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familiar with conducting library research. Ultimately, a student body that has uniformly had the opportunity for orientation to the academic advantages of the university library is more likely to excel.
INQ 101 Library Session Lesson Plan

1. Meet students at reference desk
2. Explain difference between circulation and reference

   before heading up to classroom; maybe describe

   general layout of building on the way
3. Show them how to log in for off-campus access/course

   reserves/CONSULS requests
4. Have them practice logging into their accounts and

   check their personal info for accuracy
5. Quickly demonstrate existence of electronic reserves
6. Pull invisible web infographic PDF up on screen, point

   out what the library can give them that Google can’t
7. Pass out worksheet, direct them to library website,

   research guides, course specific guides, and INQ 101

   guide; tell them they now get to work on their

   worksheet and ask questions when they have them
8. Gradually advance through guide tabs on projected

   screen to prompt them, walk around to see how they’re

   doing, offer help when it’s obvious they need it even if

   they don’t ask

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Sample INQ 101 Library Assignment

1) What is your major or a major you are considering? (If completely undecided, you can say FYE.)

   a. Who is the librarian for that major (or for FYE)?

   b. Locate that librarian and have him or her sign here:

   ____________________________________________

2) Name three people/places you can go to for help with a homework assignment.

3) What is the difference between a primary and a secondary source in your chosen field?

4) To complete this assignment, you will have to write a short (500 word) essay on __________ OR create an annotated bibliography of sources on __________ OR create a bibliography of X sources relating to __________. After each citation, you will include a direct quote from the source, cited as you would for a research paper, and a paraphrase of the same quote, also correctly cited.

   a. Use CONSULS to find a book in Buley Library that will help you with your topic.
      i. Title:
      ii. Call Number:
      iii. Location and Floor:

   b. Find a journal article to help with your topic in a database like Academic Search Premier or Academic OneFile.
      i. Cite the article in MLA, APA, or Chicago/Turabian format:

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ii. What did you do to find the full text of this article?
iii. Why does this article seem like a good resource? Be specific.

c. Using one of the dictionaries or encyclopedias the library has (in print or online), find a definition for or an explanation of your topic. You may need to look up a synonym or only part of the topic.
   i. What dictionary or encyclopedia did you use?
   ii. What word did you look up?
   iii. What definition or other information did you find?

d. Find an ebook (or part of an ebook) in Netlibrary, Credo Reference, or Gale Virtual Reference Library that will help with your topic.
   i. Title:
   ii. Author:
   iii. Date of Publication:
   iv. Why does this ebook seem like a good resource? Be specific.

e. Write your essay! Remember to cite your sources (this means creating a bibliography, putting exact quotes inside quotation marks, and indicating where you’ve paraphrased from someone else) OR Create your annotated bibliography! Remember to format your citations in correct MLA/APA/Chicago/Turabian style and use your annotations to describe in a few sentences what’s most useful about each resource OR Create your bibliography! Remember to use correct MLA/APA/Chicago/Turabian citation style and then include a direct quote and a paraphrase from each source, cited as you would in a research paper.

Note: Each INQ 101 instructor chooses his or her preferred citation style and culminating project, and also whether to include 4c, 4d, both, or neither.

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The “First Things First” tab is the first page students see on the INQ 101 Course Guide (http://libguides.southernct.edu/inq101). The answers to the first two questions on the worksheet can be found here.

The “Doing Research” tab talks about research generally, but also helps them answer question 3.

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The “Finding Books & eBooks” tab helps students with questions 4a, 4c, and 4d.

The “Finding Articles” tab helps students with question 4b.

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The “Citing Stuff” tab was created after students had trouble finding citation info buried in another tab. The “Want More?” tab was created to bring together other important information that is not immediately relevant to the INQ 101 Library Assignment.

Both the INQ 101 Library Assignment and Course Guide owe a lot to the library faculty at Mansfield University of Pennsylvania’s North Hall Library, who created the original assignment and library session that I adapted into this current form (http://lib.mansfield.edu/).

Library Session Evaluation

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1. Librarian’s Name:

2. Faculty/Instructor Name (your normal teacher):

3. Course (Dept/Number, e.g. INQ 101 or ENG 112):

4. Date and Time of Library Session:

5. What is the most significant or meaningful thing you learned during this library session? (Feel free to discuss more than one thing, if you would like.)

6. What question(s) remain(s) uppermost in your mind? (If you would like a librarian to follow up with your question(s), provide your name and email address.)

Adapted from evaluation forms created by Utah State University (http://library.usu.edu/instruct/assessment/index.php#one). Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)

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Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education
(http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency)

1. Determine the extent of information needed
   a. This is somewhat guided by the INQ 101 Library Assignment because it specifies the types of information students are required to find, but it does teach them about the variety of information sources available to them.

2. Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
   a. Students must access information in order to answer the questions, and the INQ 101 Library Session represents the first instance of the practice that will help them become more effective and efficient.

3. Evaluate information and its sources critically
   a. The “Why does this seem like a good resource?” component forces students to think about the information they’re finding and to articulate their thoughts in a way that allows their instructor to give them feedback on the evaluation process.

4. Incorporate selected information into one’s knowledge base
   a. We hope that the Library Assignment will be integrated enough into the course that whatever they learn through completing it will inform their later work, but at the very least they have started on the road to internalizing library research skills that will only improve with later repetition.

5. Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
   a. The Assignment is not a scavenger hunt—the students must also complete an essay, an annotated bibliography, or a citation exercise using the sources they find.

6. Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally
   a. The “Invisible Web” infographic plants the seed of realizing that information is not inherently freely accessible, and the need to cite the sources they find will start to get them into the habit of doing so.

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### INQ 101 Participation in Library Instruction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Percentage of Sections Participating in Library Instruction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2009</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2010</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2011</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Fall 2011 Participation Breakdown

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Participation</th>
<th>Percentage of Sections Participating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Session &amp; Assignment</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Library Session</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not participate, but will in the future</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor could not be contacted for yes or no answer</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor-generated library assignment</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No research conducted in class</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Student Self-Reported Knowledge of Library Skills and Services in Fall 2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Reporting “Agree”</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Reporting “Strongly Agree”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am learning which SCSU online databases to use and how to search them</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware that SCSU librarians can help me plan and structure a research project</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware that I can set up an appointment and meet with a librarian one on one</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is easy to navigate the library’s website (I can find books, online databases, etc.)</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Reporting “Agree”</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Reporting “Strongly Agree”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am being provided with appropriate training and support to make effective use of library and information resources</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Self-Reported Knowledge of Library Skills and Services in Fall 2011**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Reporting “Agree”</th>
<th>Percentage of Students Reporting “Strongly Agree”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am learning which SCSU online databases to use and how to search them</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware that SCSU librarians can help me plan and structure a research project</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware that I can set up an appointment and meet with a librarian one on one</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is easy to navigate the library’s website (I can find books, online databases, etc.)</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am being provided with appropriate training and support to make effective use of library and information resources</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Statistically Significant Differences Between Students Participating in the New INQ 101 Library Session and Assignment and Students Not Participating

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INQ 101 Needs Assessment Survey for Instructors
(55% of Fall 2011 instructors participated in the survey)

Of those instructors surveyed...
- 86% required their students to go to the library in person
- 81% required their students to use library resources online
- 24% required their students to access course readings on reserve at the library
- 81% reported that their students used library resources when required
- 76% helped their students navigate the library website
- 62% guided their students in the use of library resources

Results of note:
- Not a single instructor surveyed rated the new library session as worse than those they’d had in the past, with most declaring it better.
- Not a single instructor surveyed rated the student work they received after the session to be worse than the work they’d received in the past, with an even split between those finding it better and those finding it similar.
- The vast majority of instructors said they would have their classes attend the INQ 101 library session in the future, with only two dissenters, one of whom thought the same material was being presented in English classes (although it is not) and the other of whom thought the session was valuable but did not fit with his class as he taught it.

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Instructor reactions to the Library Assignment and Course Guide:
- “Excellent, hands-on assignment”
- “The fact that they had an assignment really helped the students stay on task!”
- “This was my first INQ teaching experience but the presentation and material were very well-organized and effective.”
- “This is the first year that I used this resource. It was great. Thank you.”
- “It was far more interactive and the one consistent complaint afterwards was that they had to wait a long time for the librarian to get to them to answer their questions. This is an improvement from usual complaint of boredom. I like that the students had a task to work on in real time.”

Instructor reactions to their students’ work after the session:
- “Much more focused and better integration of relevant resources into the writing”
- “I am adapting my assignments to better introduce and reinforce research skills at the library.”
- “While the sessions were more lively than they have been, the ‘one-shot’ instruction session doesn't seem to have that much of an impact. It seemed difficult for the students to see that what they learned in the session was transferable to other situations. As instructor, I need to better incorporate the library/information literacy work into the fabric of the course.”

Instructor thoughts on future INQ 101 Library Sessions:
- “In the future, I will better coordinate short and long term assignments which require the use of library resources so that I can more effectively reinforce their research skills. Most of my students seemed unfamiliar and uncomfortable with searches, and a minority were able to articulate the meaning of ‘peer-reviewed.’ Class discussions about the importance of verifying sources revolved around avoiding the least credible sources, not identifying the best and most up-to-date, credible sources.”
- “Did not attend the customized section; arranged on my own, but would in future.”
- “We didn't attend this year, but we attended last year and plan to attend next year.”
- “I usually use my own lesson plan for the library/library resources, but next Fall, I am going to sign up for a customized library session.”

Instructor-reported student comments about the library:

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- “That the librarian was very helpful and friendly :) That they are not as scared of it as they were before we had our session”
- “Like many students, they dread the prospect of having to visit the library.”
- “They have said mostly positive things, like the librarians are friendly and they can find things easily.”
- “They go there to study.”
- “Most had not visited the library until they were required to do so. The session gave them exposure to online databases and resources which they might not have known existed without this session.”
- “Basically that most of their research can be done from their laptop.”
- “They like that it's quiet. They're surprised that there's a lot available that they hadn't known about before (like the call-a-reference-librarian service). They also seem to wish they could navigate everything right away and without any learning curve whatsoever!”
- “I'm not so fearful of using the library's website's search tools’”
- “This will help me on a project for another class.”
- “They appreciated going there to learn about it. Even the peer mentor admitted she hadn't really used it much, but now saw how it would be a great resource.”
- “Students have reported that they had not known previously about how to access information and how to use the personal resources available to them in the library.”
- “They have not been for any reason other than INQ.”
- “They don't talk much about the library other than wanting later hours.”
- “Quiet. Not big enough. No amenities like other schools have (cafes/lounging areas, etc.) Not enough computers. Good place to study.”
- “Students think they can just do everything online. They are surprised to find out all the library has to offer. Sometimes they still think they don't need it because they can find it online. I think sometimes the INQ students aren't ready to fully take it in and it would be great if the library could also get a hold of them in the tier 3 course where they are making that cross over from requirements to the major and more advanced courses.”
- “Not surprisingly given the fact that I didn't make use of library resources for the course, I didn't hear anything about the library.”
- “It is usually mixed. Some students like using the computers in the library, and like the fact that it is quiet. Unfortunately, for the students who do use the library, they only look at the books if a teacher requires them too. For the library databases, a few

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students prefer the more complex databases (such as JSTOR), but most students prefer easier databases (such as CQ Researcher) that I would really like to see them get away from in college research. Of course, there are a large number who do not want to go to the library and don't unless they are forced to for an assignment. These students also seem to resist the online databases as well.”

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Tweaks Made Between Fall 2011 and Spring 2012 Semesters

- The Course Guide was improved to make navigation easier
  - The number of tabs was reduced, and information not immediately needed for the Assignment was hidden under a “Want More?” tab
  - The “Finding Books” tab was renamed “Finding Books & eBooks”
  - The link to a difficult-to-read spreadsheet that informed students about liaison librarians was changed into an easy, INQ-specific drop-down menu

- In response to faculty needs, the Assignment can now culminate in an essay, an annotated bibliography, or a citation exercise

- Question 4b on the Assignment was changed so that it asks how students found the full text of an article rather than whether the article is available in print, online, or both.

- A “minute paper” assessment has been added to the end of the class
  - Spring 2012 is Buley Library’s pilot semester for using the “minute paper” assessment after each instruction session, including INQ 101
  - There are only two questions on the “minute paper” assessment aside from information about which session the student attended:
    - What is the most significant of meaningful thing you learned during this library session? (Feel free to discuss more than one thing, if you would like.)
    - What question(s) remain(s) uppermost in your mind? (If you would like a librarian to follow up with your question(s), provide your name and email address.)
  - Only one INQ 101 library session took place prior to the Annual Conference on the First Year Experience, but questions the students asked on their evaluation sheets will be used to facilitate a second, “bibliotherapy”-themed instruction session with interactive polls

What Remains to be Done?

- Finish work on an in-house LibGuide detailing the difference between primary and secondary sources for various majors, to replace the current link to a guide created by the library at Borough of Manhattan Community College
- Increase outreach until we achieve 100% participation of INQ 101 sections in library instruction

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- Investigate the possibility of involving SCSU’s FYE learning communities (consisting of an INQ class and Critical Thinking class) such that INQ classes would come to the library for the session described above, but then the linked Critical Thinking class (with the same students but a different instructor) would come back to do “bibliotherapy” and collectively answer their remaining questions (thereby clarifying the portability of the library/information literacy skills they’re learning)

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