Core Competencies / Learning Outcomes

2. Develop and implement an effective search strategy appropriate for an information need by:
   a. Differentiating among various types of information sources...[such as] library catalogs...and recognizing the purpose of each.
   c. Identifying search terms appropriate to the research tool and the topic.

3. Locate and retrieve information by:
   a. Using the library’s print and online resources effectively.
   c. Recognizing key elements of call numbers...and using them to locate library materials.

5. Assess the research strategy by:
   a. Determining whether the information retrieved is relevant [by use of catalog Subject Headings] and sufficient for the project.
   b. Trying different...research tools [including alternate libraries] as needed.

Preparation

- Distribute copies of the Library Catalogs handout
- Open the webpage (CampusGuide) created for the Library Catalogs workshop:
  http://campusguides.glendale.edu/libworkshops/catalogs
- Open up Net Support if you plan to use it.

1. Introduction (5 minutes). Introduce yourself and welcome students to the library and the workshop. Take care of bureaucratic business, explaining the attendance roster, sharing the session agenda, and answering questions students may have.

   Briefly define (or ask students to help you define) a library’s catalog.

   ✓ An index (or list) of everything held by a specific library
   ✓ Mostly print books or e-books
   ✓ Some CDs, DVDs, web sources, special items

   Explain that every library holds different items for its patrons to use, based on what type of people most use that library, for what purposes. Today students will consider two different libraries, both of which can be helpful in completing college research: The GCC Library and the Los Angeles Public Library. The GCC Library is a college (or academic) library, used primarily by college students for research related to their college coursework, while the Los Angeles Public Library is a public library, used by any member of the general public for all sorts of purposes (reading for pleasure, school research, job searches, etc.). By the end of the workshop, students will understand better that different materials are available at different libraries, and how to check a library’s online catalog to find what you need.

2. Exercise I – Searching the GCC Library catalog (25 minutes total)

Review with students the first part of the workshop Handout, which reads as follows…

You are asked to write a research paper on the following topic:

How do superhero and comic book narratives—such as Wonder Woman, Captain America, or the X-Men—reflect social challenges in American history?

Your professor wants you to find books that address the history of superheroes and comic books in the United States, especially criticism and analysis of how they provide commentary on our society and culture. You also want to read some actual comic books, to decide for yourself if and how they deal with real-life issues.
Show students where to find the GCC Library catalog, and proceed through the five questions listed on p. 1 of the handout as a guided exercise.

You may take different teaching approaches per your preference. You may ask students to work independently to complete all five questions; circulate around the room while they're working to coach students individually and address questions as they arise (10 min.’s); then conduct a full-class “share-out” to review the answers found and discoveries made (10-15 min.’s).

Or you may address each question individually in succession, working simultaneously with the students on one question to demonstrate a specific search strategy, then let students practice the recommended strategy so as to individually complete the question, review responses as a class, and move on together to the following question. (5 min’s per question)

Whatever your approach, note that the exercises are designed to provoke the following “teachable moments” during which you will want to spend more time with explanations and demonstrations so that students better understand…

- The differences between a search by keyword, by title, or by author [Questions #1, #4, and #5].
- How to add search terms to narrow the focus and find books that are more relevant to one’s needs [Questions #2 and #4].
- How to use Subject Headings to assess a book’s topic and relevancy [Questions #3, and #4]. Note that one of the Post-Survey questions addresses which fields in the book’s record—including Subject Headings—can help determine if a book is relevant/useful. So spend some focused time demonstrating/explaining how Subject Headings function.
- After finding a book that looks useful, how to retrieve it by noting the book’s Location and Call Number, or—for ebooks—by clicking through appropriate URLs [Questions #3 and #4]. The CampusGuide includes a mini-demonstration for how to choose the right aisle for a specific call number based on signage.
- If the GCC Library doesn’t have a needed book, perhaps a different library will, such as Los Angeles or Glendale public libraries (open to the general public, regardless of what city a person lives in), or the PCC or CSULA libraries (two college libraries that we share special reciprocal borrowing agreements with) [Questions #4 and #5]. Note: The questions ask students to search for specific book types and book titles, which may not, in fact, be held by the library. That’s okay; that’s the nature of looking in a catalog! If the GCC Library doesn’t have a specific book or book type, the L.A. Public Library may, and vice versa.

3. Exercise II – Searching the Los Angeles Public Library catalog (25 minutes total)

Review with students the top of p. 2 of the workshop Handout, which reads as follows…

You’d like more information before you start to write the research paper, so you decide to check the Los Angeles Public Library, which has over 70 library branches spread throughout the city of Los Angeles, and which offers a free library card to anyone who can show proof of California residency.

Exercise II has students repeat the searches they conducted in Exercise I, but in a different library’s catalog—the Los Angeles Public Library. (Optional as intro. to Exercise II: share an educational “pitch” about the LAPL, describing some of its special features as listed on the CampusGuide.) Show students where to open the LAPL catalog, either using the link provided on the Workshop CampusGuide, or on the Library home page under Research, click through “Books in Other Libraries.” Proceed through the six questions listed on p. 2 of the handout as a guided exercise.
Similar to Exercise I, you may choose what approach you’d like in guiding students through the exercise questions. Whatever approach you take, be prepared to explain and demonstrate the ways in which the LAPL catalog functions differently from the GCC catalog (LAPL uses a discovery tool, which is becoming more common in library catalogs), while also highlighting the many similar strategies that work in “both” catalogs (use of keyword, title, or author searches; subject headings; etc.).

Many of the “teachable moments” noted for Exercise I will be re-addressed and reinforced as students complete Exercise II, with the addition of the following...

- How to use facet-searching in a discovery tool, by reviewing options to limit results by branch location, format, publication year, language, etc. (on the left side of the results page in the LAPL catalog)
- That public libraries often contain a larger diversity of items, including audio books, DVDs, music CDs, etc.
- How to retrieve a book by noting what branch it’s at (“Copy Location” in the LAPL catalog) and its call number (identified as “Shelf Location” in the LAPL catalog). Share that books can be transferred for free from one branch to another that is more close & convenient [Find item in the catalog, click “Place Hold,” enter library card number & PIN, select what branch you want to pick it up from. Free of charge unless you fail to pick up the item, then you’ll be charged $1 per item]
- That public libraries often have more books to read for fun/pleasure—such as comic books!

When all exercise questions have been completed, ask volunteers to share their responses to Question #6, describing one difference noticed between what is available at GCC versus what is available at LAPL, and/or which catalog they liked using better.

If you didn’t do so already as an introduction to Exercise II, take some time to educate students about the advantages of holding an LAPL library card. Consult the handful of highlighted facts/points (with relevant hyperlinks) listed on the CampusGuide, and/or add your own anecdotes/tips. Encourage all students to get a public library card if they don’t already have one—whether at the Los Angeles Public Library, or another public library in a city near their homes (Glendale, Burbank, Pasadena, etc.). By holding a public library card, it entitles them to borrow books, use online databases, use library facilities (such as computers and meeting rooms)—all for FREE!!

4. Post-quiz (last 5 minutes). Direct students to the link for the Post-Quiz included on the workshop CampusGuide, http://campusguides.glendale.edu/libworkshops/catalog, and ask them to answer the questions posted there.

Encourage students to take other workshops and/or Library credit classes such as LIB 190 or LIB 191 to further improve their research skills.