

Ross' Rave: Git 'er done

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A few weeks ago I was visiting daughter #1 in Texas. She recently took a tenure track position in a lovely university with large manicured lawns and equally large and groomed endowments. Her husband, a native of Texas, drove me about when she was at work to show me the local attractions and points of interest.

"That's a cow," he said. "There's another one."

He kept driving. "Look, there's another one."

He seemed to like cows.

Around noon, feeling peckish, I suggested we stop and let me treat him to lunch. I knew wherever we stopped, there would be cow on the menu.

"I know just the place," he said, spinning the wheel a bit recklessly.

The place was called, Jimmy Bob's Biggest Burgers. From the number of pick-ups in the dirt lot, it was a popular place, and promised some local color.

"I'm sure they have something you can eat," he said, remembering I'm a vegetarian.

I'm thinking, "There was no way I am asking Jimmy Bob for a veggieburger!" But I say to my son-in-law, "I'm sure there is."

That's when I noticed his code shifting.

We were barely on the porch when I head him say, "Hey, how y'all doin'?" as he tipped his John Deere cap (Where did that come from?) to a very large man in Dickies overalls, pointy boots, and a hat the size of a bathtub. "Betcha full'd up and tarred after eatin' down Jimmy Bob's," he grinned, working a toothpick that had mysteriously appeared between his incisors. The transformation was incredible.

Once inside, and throughout lunch, (By the way, do not ever ask Jimmy Bob if the fries are cooked in trans fats) my formerly sophisticated, worldly, and articulate husband of my daughter spoke in a language and dialect I had never heard. "Why are you talking like that?" I asked. "When in Rome," he replied.

I'm not unfamiliar with code shifting. We do this all the time at the reference desk and in classrooms. We talk about monographs, not books; or serials, when we mean journals, periodicals, or magazines. I suppose, it's all part of the lexicon of the university. Part of our task is inculcating in the tender, virgin minds of our students, the proper way to speak to the university, the library, and to us. There is a whole academic vocabulary which has little, or different meaning off campus. My neighbor works at Target. "Citation" to him means a speeding ticket. An "outline" is a shadow. "Minor" is someone you shouldn't date. In the "academy" however, we expect students to code shift. They need to adjust the way they talk to match our environment. If they don't, they'll be as easy to spot as a goat in a flock of sheep.

But, code shifting is more than linguistic. It's cultural. When I have a meeting with the Vice President of Academic Affairs, I expect her to be wearing a well-tailored suit, stylishly sensible shoes, and understated accessories. I'll be similarly decked out (minus the accessories, perhaps), so at least on the surface, we're on the same level. On the one hand, I show my respect for her and her position by dressing and behaving in a certain way. On the other hand, I'm doing this for my own interests. My guess is she will take my proposition (and me) a bit more seriously if I'm in uniform.

The classroom is a whole different story. Last semester, a TA for the Communications Department brought in 25 students keen on finding information on various topics for their persuasive presentations. The usual litany: national healthcare, global warming, immigration reform, same sex marriage. As they rambled in, I was struck by the diversity of this group. There were Mexican-Americans, first generation students, native English speakers, married men, soldiers, heterosexuals, chemistry majors, Hmong, mothers, part-time students, athletes, HIV positive women, parolees and honor students. They were rich and poor, religious, tired, depressed, silly and

serious. Some wore designer knock-offs, scrubs from work, spike heels, and bedroom slippers. Twenty-five individuals brought together, artificially, to my classroom at this time completely against their will, but allegedly, for some inherent good. For the next fifty minutes I needed to talk to them in a language common to them all. Sacre bleu!

The play goes on. I do my shtick. Blab, blab, demo, your turn, blab, demo, your turn, blab, blab, demo, demo, your turn, blab, blab, bye. It's like a tap lesson. I notice, as I walk about interacting with the groups, several students ask me how to find a journal.

"It's easy," I say. "Remember, I showed you how to blah, blah, blah."

"Yeah, but our teacher said we can only use journals, otherwise we get docked 10 points for the speech."

"Well, what she means is, you need to use articles that are in journals," I say. "So, tonight, when you are working on this from home, go online, click to one of the databases, like I showed you this morning, type in the keywords for your topic, and you'll get a list of articles in journals, magazines, newspaper, periodicals. All kinds of sources."

"Can't you just show us how to get to the journals on immigration?" one student asks.

"Besides," another one says, "the teacher says we can't use the internet."

As the say in Texas - Don't worry 'bout the mule son, just load the wagon

(Mission Statement...Continued from page 9)

- We believe that information literacy is so fundamental that it is an integral part of the academic experience in and out of the classroom.
- We believe course-integrated instruction connected with a real academic need is more effective than stand-alone information literacy courses or disconnected tours and library orientations.
- We believe in a planned curriculum with distinct, sequenced information literacy content that allows practice and reinforcement without duplication.
- We believe that our information literacy instruction and any subsequent activity must help to achieve a faculty member's course objectives.
- We believe that professors and students must be guided toward the understanding that the librarians' goals are interconnected with their own course goals and curricular needs.
- Above all, we emphasize the teaching of concepts over skills as a means to achieve our information literacy mission of educating information-literate lifelong learners.

We also educate individual students and faculty at the reference desk and in individualized consultations by appointment. We strive to make each of these encounters an educational experience. In these settings we reinforce information literacy concepts from prior instruction and give students further opportunities for guided practice.

Vogel Library Mission Statement

Vogel Library's mission is to educate information-literate lifelong learners.

This means:

1. Educating students is our priority. It is the focus of all we do. While our information literacy program is the flagship, our more traditional library operations also contribute toward this goal:
 - Information literacy instruction provides an opportunity to make appropriate information choices and to evaluate the quality of information.

- Reference service reinforces classroom learning in the context of answering individual questions and providing one-on-one guidance to students and staff.
- Interlibrary loan gives students access to a world of materials and ideas.
- Acquisitions / cataloging develops the collection which supports student and faculty learning.

Wartburg librarians are partners with classroom faculty in the college's educational enterprise. Our information literacy expertise complements the subject specializations of classroom faculty to create an integrated learning environment for students.

2. Information literacy is our foundation. We embrace the national Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (<http://www.ala.org/acrl/ilcomstan.html>) and that document's definition of information literacy: "...a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."

In keeping with the standards, we emphasize the teaching of enduring concepts, not skills that obsolesce with changes in the next version of familiar software.

3. Producing lifelong learners is our objective. We intend to instill and reinforce in our students the abilities and habits of information-literate lifelong learning. To evaluate and improve our performance, we continually create assessments that measure the capability of our alumni and current students in this area.

The skills and knowledge we teach make Wartburg College graduates the future leaders and responsible citizens our country needs. This is the library's contribution to the college's mission as expressed in the Wartburg College Catalog: challenging and nurturing students for lives of leadership and service as a spirited expression of their faith and learning.

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Wartburg College Mission Statement

Wartburg College is dedicated to **challenging and nurturing** students for lives of **leadership and service** as a spirited expression of their **faith and learning**.