

ON THE RHODE TO SUCCESS: DIY DESIGNING A COLLEGE RESEARCH DAY FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

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INTRODUCTION AND GOALS

Outreach to high school students is seen as a valuable and rewarding experience for all involved, but the logistics and implementation can present multiple challenges. In this paper, we will share how a high school librarian, teachers, and academic librarians collaborated to plan, implement, assess, and refine an effective research experience. Our model will showcase one such experience designed and implemented for a community of diverse high school students exploring their junior year capstone projects in an academic library setting. We will share how to plan your own research day for high school students that will energize everyone involved and engage and encourage students to do their best work.

This paper will discuss the three goals for this workshop: 1) identify steps to develop strategic, meaningful pre-activities for high school students preparing to experience college-level research, 2) consider how to adapt and modify an academic library programmatic first year student information literacy instruction in order to support a one-day program for high school students, and 3) evaluate what high school students learned at each visit to the university, and how the research day was modified according to students' self-assessment of their learning.

WHY WE DID IT

The Paul Cuffee Charter School Librarian and the URI Head of Instructional Services librarian met in 2009 when one librarian was completing the School Library Media Specialist Teaching Certification track at the URI Graduate School of Library and Information Studies program. The two librarians discussed possible ideas for a collaborative instruction project but did not have an opportunity to do so until 2015. In 2013 the Rhode Island Library Association (RILA) Information Literacy Action Round Table (ILART) was established to provide a

means and direction for librarians of all types to share ideas and experiences, and to collaborate on projects supporting the development of information literate Rhode Island citizens, especially students. Soon after the ILART events and meetings began, the Cuffee School Librarian sent a formal memo (see Appendix A) to the URI librarian requesting information literacy instruction for Cuffee students to be held at the University Libraries. The memo outlined goals and objectives intended to both support the students' information research for their junior year capstone research Projects (mandated for graduation) and also to provide the students with a college day experience on the campus of the University of Rhode Island.

At Paul Cuffee Upper School, the Capstone Research Project is a graduation requirement that students are expected to complete in their junior year. Historically the Capstone had taken place during the students' senior year but after examining the project's requirements and outcomes, the teachers and the school librarian decided it fit better into the curriculum a year sooner. Once this decision was made, the Cuffee School librarian began plans to bring the junior year students to the University of Rhode Island's Carothers Library for a research day. Her goal was to provide extra support for the Capstone Research Projects that would also allow the students to experience a day in the life as a college student.

The Carothers Library has been working to increase the number of high school classes that visit for instruction purposes. It is important to point out that recent fall semester enrollment reports at the University of Rhode Island (URI) show that for the period 2012 - 2015, between 43% and 50% of each incoming freshman class consisted of students who were residents of Rhode Island. Most of these students graduated from Rhode Island secondary schools (University of Rhode Island, Office of Institutional Research, n.d.).

The transition from high school to college is an important stage in a student's life, especially in terms of

information literacy competency. Beginning in the fall of 2016, all incoming URI students will be required to complete three credits of information literacy instruction as part of the General Education Program. High school students who visit the University Libraries will likely be more familiar with the library, and thus less anxious about using a large academic library when they begin college. Furthermore, by learning and practicing information research skills and concepts, students will not only improve their junior year Capstone Project research but will be building necessary information literacy competencies for the future. Generally, the Library Research Day welcomes students to college life, giving them a taste for what to expect, inspires them to reach higher, builds confidence, and empowers students as information researchers.

HOW WE DID IT

Planning for the students' research day visit to URI required the librarians to maintain open and regular communication using all traditional methods including email, phone, texting, and Facebook messages. We also used Google tools such as Google Keep and Google Docs to share and flesh out ideas and finally to complete the lesson plans. Our game plan included creating a library research day for almost 70 junior year students that would provide additional instruction for students (following their information literacy boot camp at Cuffee) and to provide the students with the time for independent research time in the library. URI has an established policy and procedures document, that is shared with outside groups who wish to visit the University Library for instruction sessions (University of Rhode Island. University Libraries. Public Services Department, 2012). This document asks groups to provide information such as the instruction goals and objectives for the session, and shares logistical details about library facilities available and information regarding parking and other pertinent information for off-campus visitors. As planning got underway, each librarian worked from their end to identify staffing, (including teacher chaperones, librarians from Cuffee, and instruction librarians at URI); as well as buses for transportation, food options for lunch, and printing arrangements for capturing research. The more important decisions about what students needed to be able to know and do when they left the University Libraries were discussed in depth by both Cuffee teaching staff and the URI librarians.

INSTRUCTION AT CUFFEE AND AT URI

Following completion of a Research Skills Assessment developed in collaboration by the Cuffee librarian and a Cuffee English teacher, students participated in an Information Literacy Boot-Camp supported by a Cuffee Capstone Research LibGuide (Paul Cuffee Upper School Library, 2015) and the URI Libraries' InfoRhode information literacy tutorials (University of Rhode Island. University Libraries. Public Services Department, 2015). The Cuffee librarian and teachers worked with each student to develop and draft an essential question that would be used to begin their research process. Using a Google spreadsheet, the questions were shared with URI librarians who reviewed them to

determine if they were open-ended and had some academic research potential. A Research Day Schedule was developed and shared with all librarians and teachers. At the University Libraries, librarians worked to develop a one-and-a-half hour instructional session; the session included a brief tour of the library's main service points and collections, direct instruction on finding books using the URI Libraries Search catalog, and on finding articles using article databases. The URI librarians created the lesson for the high school students by modifying a library tour used for freshman library orientation, book searching activities from a summer prematriculation program, and an article searching lessons from an introductory Writing and Rhetoric course. A deliberate decision was made to provide equal parts direct instruction and independent student searching and practice. Following the formal session, Cuffee students had a picnic lunch on the University's Quadrangle and then returned to the library for more independent research.

The day after the Cuffee students visit to the University Libraries, they completed an online 3-2-1 Survey with the Cuffee librarian. The results of this survey indicated that a second visit to the library would help students to both clarify their research topics and essential questions and also to practice and refine their research strategies and skills. A second visit was scheduled and planned for January 2016, about two months after the first visit.

REWARDS

There were several immediate rewards from this initiative. Positive student feedback was immediate as almost all Cuffee students commented that they wanted to return to the University Libraries to continue their research projects. Many students found that their original topics were suitable and thus continued to work on finding the required and appropriate information sources. However a fair number of students discovered that their research topics and essential questions were either much too broad or much too narrow, and needed refinement. The second visit to the University Libraries proved an important turning point both for the students and for the librarians who designed of a model of "Library Research Day".

Cuffee students shared the rewards of their research experience in several ways: several students shared written reflections and others videotaped themselves explaining the value of their visit to the URI University Libraries. One student said, "During the first trip to URI, I found myself completing my work while enjoying myself. It was rather easy to meet the requirements for the day because I had a good amount of help, and time to meet them. For one, being in a college setting alone evoked concentration. It was quiet enough so that I could focus on the task at hand without feeling like I was in a silent library...". Another student commented on how the research experience was enhanced by having access to so many resources: "...[T]he most helpful thing about using U.R.I was taking advantage of their computers. Their research data base [was] so helpful to gather scholarly articles and information for everyone to answer their essential question...even though it might be strange for you to know, I actually felt like a college

student having a lot of freedom.” A third student reflected on the college experience opportunity: “On a journey of searching for colleges early, this helped me pick URI as one of my choices to attend after high school. The opportunity of going to URI for research did not just help me with my capstone, it helped me beyond that. Extreme gratitude is sent to the teachers that planned the trips to URI.”

POTENTIAL CHALLENGES

During the LOEX 2016 interactive workshop, the presenters shared six possible challenges to the success of such a Library Research Day model. Workshop facilitators assigned one challenge to each group and attendees worked together to brainstorm solutions to the challenges. After a short discussion period, each group reported the ideas generated to all attendees. The challenges included the following:

Scenario 1: Why - Rationale

Both high school teachers and college librarians are in sync and want to work together but high school administration just doesn't get it. "Why can't the kids just go to the school and public libraries for this stuff? Why should we spend scarce field trip money on this trip?"

Ideas shared by Scenario Group 1

- Share work examples from previous students to let administrators see the value of past collaborations, or of the need.
- Good opportunity to encourage future college students
- Share each institution's strategic plan, mission & vision, show correlations of goals
- Share and review the AASL/ACRL crosswalk with administrators so they can see the similarities of instructional goals at secondary and post-secondary information literacy levels.
- Ask for the college to fund some of expenses; talk to admissions office (about retention).

Scenario 2: How - Logistics

The academic librarians are "all in" and want to host high school students for a research day, but the high school librarian doesn't have money to get a bus for travel or enough teachers who want to accompany the group. How many alternative ideas can you develop for transporting the students to the college? How can the school librarian convince other HS teachers to join her merry band of researchers? How can she convince them it's worth the time and energy?

Ideas shared by Scenario Group 2

Transportation ideas include:

- Taking the city bus or asking parent volunteers to drive.
- Invite the academic librarian to come to your high school (some collaboration is better than nothing - this

way students will see that both librarians have the same expectations!);

Staffing ideas include:

- Teacher chaperones - ask the unlikely chaperone, perhaps the physical education, science or math teacher, maybe teacher's aide.

Scenario 3: Content #1 - Student learning activities at the high school and university campuses

Academic librarians want to emphasize "button pushing skills" instead of the evaluation of information sources that the school librarian thinks would be more useful. How can the school librarian convince the academic librarians that her students are ready for higher order thinking (or vice versa)?

Ideas shared by Scenario Group 3

- Focus on the student learning.
- Button pushing and evaluation can be used in the same lesson - concepts and skills go hand in hand.
- Teaching needs to be a collaborative; both librarians need to ask "What is the goal?" and "What do students need to know and be able to do when they leave?"
- Use a pre-test for students to see where they are with button-pushing skills.
- Look at standards for the state and ACRL and come together.
- Conversation around the learning objectives for the assignment.
- Do a better job of communicating.
- Academic librarian offers learning objectives as a menu of services they can offer.
- Conduct a pre-test for students' research skills.

Scenario 4: Content #2 - Student learning activities at the high school and university campuses

High school students are a diverse group of learners and need support in different areas - how can the school librarian collaborate with academic librarians to develop a meaningful library instruction session that supports all the students equally?

Ideas shared by Scenario Group 4

- Share techniques for differentiation.
- Discuss different modes of information consumption and creation.
- Design the session using Universal Design.
- McTighe and Wiggins, Understanding by Design.
- Think of multiple learning styles, be sure everyone has an opportunity to express what they learn.

Scenario 5: Content #3 - Student learning activities at the high school and university campuses

The high school librarian is concerned about the transfer of knowledge between the high school learning activities and when the students get to the college library. What strategies can you think of to help the students (and the instructors!) move the learning along without having to start from scratch once the high schoolers arrive to the college library?

Ideas shared by Scenario Group 5

- Share library jargon, try to use same language for terms in the concepts and skills being taught.
- Ask students to reflect on what they learned in a minute writing, “think, pair, share,” teaching another student what they learned.
- Ask students to complete a 3-2-1 survey.

Scenario 6: Post- visit follow-up - Student post assessments/survey, librarian/teacher communication, etc.

Many times after a wonderful collaboration, everyone is tired and/or they have to quickly move on to their next project. Often the interested parties drop the ball and the follow up and assessment pieces are lost. What ideas do you have that would help the high school and academic librarians to plan ahead of time and will prevent this from happening? How can the students, teachers, and librarians celebrate and make note of the good work that has happened during the Research Day workshop?

Ideas shared by Scenario Group 6

- It is very important on day 0 to start planning.
- Set specific target dates for follow-up and assessment - pick tools that will support the assessment and follow-up (standardized rubric, SurveyMonkey or other software).
- Put dates on the calendar.
- Celebrate by holding a face to face or online poster session, or Research Night Extravaganza for the school community.
- Follow-up assessment can be done by classroom teachers, school librarian, or even in a pilot project done jointly by the school and academic librarian team.

In closing, this team of librarians and teachers found working on this initiative enlightening and energizing as we learned more about the similarities in others' instruction goals and practices. Mostly, though, our greatest reward is the students' success in discovering the joy of developing a research question that works and completing their capstone research projects.

The authors thank the attendees of the interactive workshop held at LOEX 2016 for their collaboration and contributions to the session and to this paper. We would also like to recognize the team of teachers and librarians whose energy and collaborative spirit made this project a success: Tom Beall, Jeremy Bourget, Pam Dodman, Alysia D'Urso, Jim Kinnie, and Katie Leahy.

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APPENDIX A

Memo from Cuffee Librarian to URI Library Staff



PAUL CUFFEE SCHOOL
A Maritime Charter School for Providence Youth

Memo

To: Professor Mary MacDonald, University of Rhode Island
From: Jen Thomas, Library Media Specialist, Paul Cuffee School
Date: October 29, 2015
Subject: Paul Cuffee School visit to URI Library (11/9/15)

All juniors at Paul Cuffee Upper School are expected to complete a capstone research project. In order to support this work and to give our students the opportunity to experience "a day in the life at an academic library," we would like to partner with the Instruction Services department at the University Library at URI.

OUR STUDENT WILL KNOW/UNDERSTAND:	OBJECTIVES FOR THEIR VISIT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The assignment Their topic The essential question Keywords and research questions Ethics, intellectual copyright Research basics: bibliography elements, keyword searches, abstracts, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive direct instruction from a librarian; this could include any of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Search strategies using the OPAC, research databases and/or search engines Navigate a university library website Be given a tour or a "scavenger hunt" activity around the library Have time to locate and collect relevant sources (both print and digital) to support their research (their task is to print out at least 5 online sources; honors students will need to locate a print source and photocopy a useful chapter (PCS can pay for this if we can work out logistics) Have time to explore campus; perhaps going to lunch in the dining hall or other dining facility

STUDENT TASK: The morning will be devoted to instruction and source location. The afternoon will be spent compiling their sources and synthesizing the information into a graphic organizer/notes sheets that we (PCS) give them, ultimately leading to an annotated bibliography. Prior to departure from URI, all students are expected to have annotated at least three of their five sources; we will be collecting this work.



PAUL CUFFEE SCHOOL
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CAPSTONE PROJECT SCOPE & SEQUENCE:

UNIT: Capstone Project	GRADE: 11
TEXTS/RESOURCES: online sources, including professional and educational websites, online periodicals, journals, magazines, and other published research.	
TARGET SKILLS:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Questions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> creating a strong, essential question with the correct scope for the project creating a strong hypothesis based on research—not just prior knowledge developing research questions/sub-questions Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> utilizing online databases, periodicals, and academic journals avoiding intellectual plagiarism exploring media copyright collecting information utilizing notecards <ul style="list-style-type: none"> citing, collecting quotes, organizing ideas, prioritizing ideas, making connections Action Component <ul style="list-style-type: none"> professionalism interview skills how to design and conduct an experiment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> different elements avoiding bias ethical practices data collection (and how to get "good" data) Writing Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reinforcing elements of a scientific paper/lab report synthesizing multiple sources for background information finding patterns and drawing conclusions from data proposing real-world application and connections Presentations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> display boards: formal and informal speeches/presentations: formal and informal 	
PRODUCT:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capstone Project paper, tri-fold board, and presentation 	



PAUL CUFFEE SCHOOL
A Maritime Charter School for Providence Youth

Elements

Paper: You will present your project, research, experiences, and findings in a scientific report. The paper must be at least five pages, but most will be eight to ten pages long. You will be given explicit instructions on how to format the paper.

Physical presentation: You will create a tri-fold board to display your research, process, and findings at the final exhibition. There may be additional presentation options, which we will inform you about it in the spring.

Oral presentation: You will create a 3-5 minute oral presentation that you can give to small groups of people at the final exhibition.

Honors

All interested students will have an opportunity to apply for an honors distinction on their project. Any interested students will submit their project, complete an interview with a special committee, and meet all honors expectations for their action-component, paper, and presentation. Those selected for honors will be given 10-15 minutes to present in front of a large group at the exhibition. (Our deadline for clear honors expectations is December 1st.)

Capstone Project Overview

Your capstone project is one of the four elements required for graduation. The project is an opportunity to do research in an area that you are personally interested in while also helping you learn important academic skills for college and introducing you or giving you more experience with possible majors or career paths. You will be working on your project throughout the year, and the process will culminate with a final exhibition in May.

Process

In the fall, your advisors will help you brainstorm possible topics. Your topic could be related to a possible college major, something you want to pursue for a career, a hobby you enjoy, a community group you want to work with, or simply a topic you are interested in. You could examine hunger in the city of Providence and volunteer at the food bank, conduct research on the environmental problems at Mashapaug Pond and the health implications for surrounding residents, or educate women about male-dominated fields and organize a job fair for young women. Whatever you're interested in can become your project.

Every project will be rooted in a question: that might be a larger, global question or a question that just pertains to you. *How do coaches and business managers inspire greatness in their teams? What are the education requirements for a large variety of jobs? How can major stereotypes about the disabled community be dispelled?* All of these are examples of questions that could drive a project.

Once you have a question, you will do research and design your project. Your advisors and teachers will be helping you every step of the way. Every project must include an action component. That may be an internship, volunteering, interviews, organizing an event, creating something to share with the community, etc.. Most of this work will be done in the winter and early spring.

Finally, you will compile your findings into a research paper. You will create a display and present this paper and your project to fellow students, your families, and members of the community at the Senior Project Exhibition at the end of the year. After the whole experience, you will write a reflection to be included in your senior portfolio.

You will have the support of your advisor, teachers, core group, peers, and family members every step of the way, but this is an independent project that will give you the freedom to learn more about something you're truly interested in. It is a great opportunity to learn more about the world and grow as a person.

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