Fear of Fa(i)(l)ling: Abandoning Old Assessment Footholds for New Ground

Sarah Crissinger
Cara Evanson
James Sponsel
Information Literacy, Davidson College
Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

Critical Information Literacy

Assessment in Action

Institutional Accreditation

Refine assessment

Make conclusive

Analyze

Plan summative

Organize produce

Compare

Review

Hypothesis

Standardized critique

Learning evaluate

Test
What assessment pressures are you feeling at your institution?
Foothold as leverage for aspirational assessment practices

Our foothold: Library Orientation
Looking Back

Lamoille Canyon by Tee Poole is licensed under a CC BY-NC-SA 2.0
Library Orientation Assessment
Superficially information literate
Finding space to start critical conversations
Part 1: Library Davidson 101: Information Literacy 2014

Instructions for completing the exercise

You are now going to walk through the steps to completing a short research assignment related to The Other Side of Moore, the summer reading book. You do not need to have read the book to complete this assignment.

If you need help, click on the Need Help? tab above.

Scenario

As Davidson students, evaluating the sources you find and deciding which ones to use in your academic work will be an important task. Imagine that after reading The Other Side of Moore, you start to think about how the novel's social environment influences its characters. You expand your reflection to how your environment might shape you, and decide to write a paper on the impact of college on students abroad. After some initial research, you find four sources listed below.

Please complete the following six steps based on this scenario. (Reminder: You do not need to read The Other Side of Moore to complete this assignment.)

1. Review the following sources. Consider whether or not each source would be useful when writing a paper about identity formation and college students.


   (Note: You do not need to read The Other Side of Moore to complete this assignment.)

Why an exercise?

This exercise will acquaint you with the type of research that you'll be expected to do at Davidson.

It also gives us an insight into how college students perceive the impact of college on students abroad. After some initial research, you found four sources listed below.

Questions? Need help?

Ask a Librarian

Text: 704-335-3725

Email: edx@library.davidson.edu

Hours when a librarian is available: M-Th 9am-9pm, F 9am-5pm

Exercise

Exercise Instructions

Research is more than just finding and retrieving information. You will be collecting information on your own assignments at Davidson, and throughout your life. In order to thrive as a student, and more broadly as a global citizen, it is important for you to be able to use and create information in an efficient and effective manner. The goal of this exercise is to challenge you to understand your information needs and to encourage you to begin thinking about how you use information.

For the exercise, you will collect three components:

1. Component 1: Find the book "The Other Side of Moore" (Note: You do not need to read the book to complete this assignment.)
2. Component 2: Discuss with your peers what you found.
3. Component 3: Post Discussion Board Comment.

Library Davidson 101 > Exercise > Exercise

Exercise

- Component 1: Find the book "The Other Side of Moore" (Note: You do not need to read the book to complete this assignment.)
- Component 2: Discuss with your peers what you found.
- Component 3: Post Discussion Board Comment.
Case Study

3 studies - pick 2 - reflect on am 11/18 year old

College First Year Student (2nd semester)

→ WRL 101 last semester - familiar w/a few lib resources

→ tie into soci class interest by reading a blog (??)
  Economist? | pop | Buzzfeed?
  tie to academic research project

→ from dorm - very independent
doesn't do thorough search (not a savvy searcher)

Google / Social Media

→ Savvy searcher
→ multiple platforms
→ Google scholar papers
→ following links/tails Wikipedia citations
→ not ethical - working up own digital identity (blog?)
→ YouTube channel

Personal Knowledge | Expert | Intern?

→ policy report
  - based on research
  - bias?
  - not taking advantage of all kinds of sources
  - talk to colleagues
  - handpicked
  → events, social activism?

New Faculty Orientation - Personal Librarians?

Writing Program - Personal Librarians

Privilege
→ Critical thinking about PLS
→ Agency in info use
→ Imp of IL
→ Tangible?
Why do we assess library orientation?

What holds us back?
Why do we assess library orientation?

In the past:

- Effectiveness of what we taught

- Benchmark student skills
Why do we assess library orientation?

Now:

- Have a grasp on students conceptual knowledge
- Start conversations
- Develop an agenda for instruction
What do you want to accomplish at your institution?
Why do we assess library orientation?

- Have a grasp on students conceptual knowledge of information literacy
- Start conversations
- Develop an instructional agenda for information literacy

What holds us back?

- Fear of failing
- Fear of losing focus on skill-based learning
- Fear of doing improper assessment
What is the right way to measure?

**Direct:** Clear Cause and Effect, Easy to Explain/Analyze
Tangible measures

**Indirect:** Nebulous relationship between inputs/outputs,
Requires Interpretation
Indirect Measures

✓ Survey

? Exercise
Case Study Exercise

**Student**
- “Traditional research venues” (Database)
- Not thorough in research
- Access to info through college
- Writing a paper

**Vlogger**
- Uses social media and Google Scholar
- Searches in multiple places
- Has no special access
- Publishing video

**Intern**
- Relies on in-person information
- Stops at Google
- Access through employer
- Social Media for employer

Varying Degrees of:
- Source Type
- Effort/Persistence
- Access
- Final Product
Case Study Exercise

- **Student**
  - Access through college

- **Vlogger**
  - Has no special access

- **Intern**
  - Access through employer
What we lost

- Longitudinal data
- Skill-based learning
- Knowledge of student skills
What are your footholds?
• Shallow understanding of bias
• A preference for varied and diverse sources

“By only sticking to her organization's sources and asking her colleagues, the Intern is missing out on unbiased factual information to share with the public”
• A call for more **persistence**
• A preference for **academic sources** (though some understanding of value of non-scholarly)

“By only using peer-reviewed articles, the Student limited her research to primarily academic perspectives on the topic, whereas if she had included user-generated content, like blogs or social media posts she could have gained a more comprehensive understanding of the topic”
Anxiety
Hello,

We hope that you’re having a great second week at Davidson! We know that the transition from high school to college-level scholarship can be difficult. In Library Davidson 101, you specifically expressed some anxiety about doing research in college, especially if you didn’t have to do a lot of research in high school.

We wanted to let you know that we’re always here to help you with your research paper. Librarians can help you choose a topic, find information, integrate sources, figure out if your thesis is too broad or narrow, and locate obscure or hard-to-find information. You can e-mail us at askalibrarian@davidson.edu or schedule a consultation with us at any point in the semester.

...
“he assumes that he cannot get access to the article because he must pay, while many websites (e.g. The New York Times) offer free access to students.”

He doesn't have access to the article he wants to read and instead of looking for it in another location or format, he settles for other information.

“In the case of the YouTube Vlogger, he finds the perfect article with in-depth information about what he wants to share yet he's not willing to pay for it.”
→ Ethics in Information Access lecture (partnership with faculty member & Vann Center for Ethics), Open Access Week 2015

→ Why You Won’t Have JSTOR When You Graduate and What You Can Do About It (partnership with Center for Career Development), March 2016

→ Information Privilege Booth (partnership with Questbridge Scholars), March 2016
This past summer, we asked Davidson students to analyze a description of a scenario similar to the one you just experienced. Specifically, we asked students to comment on what assumptions the vlogger made and what opportunities he/she missed due to lack of awareness or lack of access to information.

Here are some of their comments:

"The vlogger's **ignorance** toward the subject and **laziness** during his research results in him overlooking the importance of having multiple perspectives on a subject"

"The vlogger is both **lazy** and **harmful** in her approach"

"The vlogger could, also, just **man up and pay the fee**"

How much information privilege does the Davidson community take for granted?

**Reflect on this exercise**
What’s holding you back?
Fear
What are your barriers?
Consider your barriers. What are ways you can overcome your barriers?
Think back to what you want to accomplish. In what ways do your goals justify taking a risk?
Questions?