

RESC 098 TECHNOLOGY EQUALS PROGRESS

Library Research Assignment

DUE: On or before Thursday's class, October 17, 2013.

PURPOSE: To become familiar with a university library, both its print sources and its electronic sources. To practise finding and evaluating appropriate sources. To learn search strategies for research purposes in college. To write a summary of your library research findings.

INDIVIDUAL ASSIGNMENT: Before this visit to the library, you will have identified an area of sustainability that you plan to make the focus of your Symposium project. From that general area, prepare a list of two or three specific topics of which you would like to learn more.

Because this is our first trip to Bucknell's Bertrand Library, we have designed this exercise to be a scavenger hunt. This assignment is intended to give you the skills needed to find additional materials for assignments later this semester as well as for other classes, both now and in the future.

WARNING: Completing this assignment and writing up your library research findings requires a significant time commitment. Do NOT start it the day before it is due. You will not finish it.

COMPONENTS OF ASSIGNMENT

Task 1: Go to the Library's Research Help site: <http://bucknell.libanswers.com/index.php>

Read the entries for:

Developing a research topic: (<http://bucknell.libanswers.com/a.php?qid=89705>)

Defining keywords: (<http://bucknell.libanswers.com/a.php?qid=90516>)

Evaluating Web sources: (<http://bucknell.libanswers.com/a.php?qid=133151>)

Peer-reviewed sources: (<http://bucknell.libanswers.com/a.php?qid=133134>)

Task 2: Think of 2 keywords for your initial search based on the readings.

Note that you may have to narrow or broaden your search, depending on how many sources you find using different keywords or research strategies.

In your written library research findings, answer these questions:

What keywords did you try?

Did you have to perform more than two searches?

What did you learn about choosing keywords from this exercise?

Task 3: Return to the DATABASES link in MyBucknell, under Library. Find an article in a scholarly journal (not a magazine) about your topic.

For your databases, use Research Library Complete, GreenR, or WorldCat Local.

Task 4: Print or copy (i.e., cut-and-paste or screen-shot) the first page from the results of your two keyword searches, highlighting the sources you think look particularly informative or seem best related (i.e., most promising) to your topic. Label the sheet with the database name if it is not clear from the printout, and submit it with your written research findings.

Task 5: In your written research findings, answer these questions:

Which database produced the best results for your topic?

Do you think this database will always be the best source for research projects? Why or why not?

Task 6: What other keywords or subjects did you find after doing the search? Do a quick second search on ONE of the databases using one of these alternative keywords or subjects. Print the first page of results from this search and attach it to your report.

Answer the question:

Did the second search produce better or worse results in terms of relevance for your project?

Task 7: Using these search results, find one scholarly journal article. Go to the abstract, which provides a summary of the paper. If the article looks appropriate, download the PDF file, if available. Do not simply print the article file from the database, as many of the databases do not include important tables, equations, graphs, and pictures that accompany the print sources. For future assignments, you may use the database file, BUT check that the electronic file copy is complete. Your best bet is to print the PDF files.

(HINT: To determine whether journals are available online or in print, use the Journal Titles tab on Research by Subject: <http://researchbysubject.bucknell.edu>).

Task 8: Look at the references from this article. Highlight any resources that look as if they might also provide good, relevant information for your topic. Go to 'Web of Knowledge' database and conduct a citation search for articles that reference this article. Print the results of this search. Highlight any sources that you think look particularly promising. You may also do a cited reference search by using 'Google Scholar.' (Check out <http://bucknell.libanswers.com/a.php?qid=133142> .)

Task 9: Based on your earlier results, perform at least one keyword search in the WorldCat catalog. Copy (i.e., cut-and-paste or screen-shot) the first page of results; highlight the sources that look most promising. Go to the stacks and look for one book on this list. Make sure the book is listed as being in the Bertrand collection.

Did you find the book? If so, photocopy the citation information and the table of contents for this book.

Whether or not you found the book, also look on the shelf around that book. Write down the citation for one title on the physical space next to your source, or where your source should be, if it's not there. Include the call number after the reference.

Does this source look promising or not? Why or why not?

Did the keyword used for the catalog search differ from the database searches?

How did the keyword used for the catalog search differ from the database searches?

Task 10: Finally, do a regular Google search on one of the keywords or topics that you found. What were the first sources listed? How did they differ from the academic sources?

Your final written report of your research findings should contain the following sections:

1. **Responses to each of the parts above.** You should write a sentence or two answering any questions asked in parts 1 through 10 (questions are in bold above). Attach any printouts you make and clearly indicate on the printouts which sections they belong to).
2. **Reference List.** All sources found in your scavenger hunt should be cited appropriately in the text and a reference list should be cited. Cite only the sources you used in your report and use a consistent citation scheme.
3. **Reflection.** Write a paragraph reflecting on this exercise in research. Do you feel more confident in your ability to locate and identify useful reference sources? Are you better equipped to approach academic research? Comment on the aspects of this process that you found most useful.