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**"The library was my favorite part": a strengths-based approach to library instruction in summer programs**

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# “The Library Was My Favorite Part”

a strengths-based approach to library instruction in summer programs

## Balfour-Hesburgh Scholars

High-achieving incoming students from underrepresented populations

### Goals

1. Help students become familiar with the library and feel comfortable in the space;
2. Guide students to begin thinking of research as something based in curiosity and interest and to notice that it is a messy, iterative process.

### Context

Summer immersion program that includes two library instruction sessions

### Activities

Freewrite and brainstorming activity that asks students to evaluate their personal interests, worries, and curiosity in order to find a research question related to their personal interests or life situation

Framing: What things are you interested in learning more about? You can do research on that in college! Sample student comment: "I'm interested in sports and music. I can do research on those things together?"

Space warning: Provide a tour and introduction to the stacks. We give them time to explore the high-density shelving, to explore how books are organized in the library, and ask questions about the classification system. We ask: How is this similar to your high school or public library?

## Warrior Scholars

Current and former military service members interested in pursuing higher education

### Goals

1. Make students aware of the types of resources and services typically available through academic libraries;
2. Recognize the areas in which they already have gained research skills in their roles in the service

### Context

Two-week intensive program that includes a one-hour visit to the library

### Activities

Identify areas of expertise from their experience in the military and make connections to how they might use those skills in doing research and accessing or using library resources

Provide a tour and introduction to the stacks, along with an introduction to the classification system.

Provide an introduction to and time for exploration of a few databases that are commonly made available to students at institutes of higher education. We ask: How are these databases similar to and different from databases or other resources you've used in your past experiences?

## Summer Scholars

High school students attending an intensive summer course that provides a preview of college academics

### Goal

1. Teach students targeted search skills to answer specific questions related to the theme of their program.

### Context

Two-week themed intensive program that includes 1-2 library sessions

### Activities

Students learn Google advanced search skills and how to access and use databases that have curated lists (resources that are available to them without institutional affiliation).

Students also learn to use reference sources and specialized databases for specific information needs.

In both cases, we help students see the similarities between searches they do everyday and the searches they do to find information for their program.

# Building on students’ existing skills helps them recognize the value of their previous experiences and of the library session.

## Library Anxiety

An experience of library phobia - a fear of not understanding library processes, a perceived skill deficit related to searching and using library resources, and a fear of asking for help

Based on Constance A. Mellon (1986), "Library anxiety: A grounded theory and its development." *College & Research Libraries*, 47(2), 160-165.

## Deficit Thinking

“Labels any student that does not fit into a traditional norm as ‘at-risk’ or working at a deficit. The deficit mindset often occurs with the good intention of supporting these students; however, it can lead to problematic assumptions.”

Chelsea Heinbach, Brittany Paloma Fiedler, Rosan Mitola and Emily Pattri (Feb. 6, 2019), "Dismantling Deficit Thinking: A Strengths-Based Inquiry into the Experiences of Transfer Students In and Out of Academic Libraries." *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*.

## Strengths-Based Approach

“To learn holistically about the previous experiences of our... students, how those experiences influenced their lives... and subsequently, discover how we can best support them.”

Chelsea Heinbach, Brittany Paloma Fiedler, Rosan Mitola and Emily Pattri, "Dismantling Deficit Thinking: A Strengths-Based Inquiry into the Experiences of Transfer Students In and Out of Academic Libraries." *In the Library with the Lead Pipe*, Feb. 6, 2019.

## DEFINITIONS