

**At the Intersection: Librarianship, Writing Studies, and Sources
as *Topoi***

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Abstract

Information literacy struggles to find its disciplinary home. Two disciplines that have laid a strong claim to it are librarianship and writing studies. While both are doing strong research, they both admit that by and large, students in introductory composition classes are not embracing the concept. The article suggests that by reinforcing the metaphors, already present in both disciplines, of sources as place, students might be convinced to take a more rhetorical, thus more comprehending, view of integrating their sources into their writing.

On April 11, 2011, reporter Dan Berrett published an article entitled “Skimming the Surface” in *Inside Higher Ed*. In the article, he reported on a panel at CCCC that presented the findings to date of The Citation Project. According to the article, Rebecca Moore Howard and Sandra Jamieson shocked a standing room only audience with their findings that only 9% of research citations summarize students’ research; the other 91% quotes, paraphrases, or “patchwrites” (patchwriting is a sort of hybrid between quotation and paraphrase) very small portions of the source, indicating that the student has probably not read and absorbed the source material, but has located the first likely-looking passage—since more than 75% of the cited material appeared in the first three pages of the article—and generated a source from it (Jamieson and Moore Howard). The author of the article uses terms like “stunned,” “shock,” and “gasps” to emphasize the dramatic nature of these findings.

The audience was probably not as stunned as the reporter might have us believe. Those who teach First Year Composition and other writing classes, especially to undergraduates, have long realized that students’ interaction with sources is problematic. It is no secret that students value the speed and efficiency of the internet in finding sources at the same time that they are confused by the multitude of possibilities available. Nor is it unusual for students to insert quotes from unread articles into their papers at the last minute. Perhaps because of its origin at CCCC, the article mentions libraries only in the last paragraph, and then only to quote an unnamed audience member: “What we’ve forgotten is that libraries were the repositories where people made judicious claims about what sources are worth reading” (Jamieson and Moore Howard).

This very situation that perplexes the *Inside Higher Ed* reporter and vexes the researchers and audience members of the C’s panel sets the stage for this article. Although

The Citation Project researchers presented the most current research, the article describing their findings leaves a large gap which is filled only by an audience member's quote; the entire discipline of library science and the sub-discipline of information literacy were absent from the discussion. This lacuna works in two directions; librarians also publish almost exclusively in library journals and present at library conferences, and they too miss many opportunities to provide disciplinary insights from rhetoric and composition. True interaction between the two disciplines about mutual concerns regarding plagiarism and the discovery and successful utilization of sources, while not unheard of, is somewhat rare, especially on the more theoretical level. This article will attempt to bring librarianship and writing studies into conversation about information literacy by suggesting that introducing metaphors of place¹ might provide a starting point for the cross-disciplinary thinking needed to overcome some of the dilemmas that both disciplines have identified in students' research and use of sources. If true interdisciplinary cooperation does not happen in the near future, information literacy as a sub-discipline may well disappear, as neither group sees the entire picture. Only by overlaying the two pictures stereographically will a three-dimensional representation emerge.

Information literacy, with its roots in librarianship and its tendrils reaching across disciplines, lacks a well-defined disciplinary home. In many ways, its borders bend and blur, refusing to remain fixed, making it a non-sovereign territory. Information literacy has been claimed by different disciplines at different times and for different purposes, most notably by librarianship and writing studies². The disciplines seem to have gone their own ways,

¹ The traditional metaphor for the incorporation of sources is that of the conversation, often referring to the Burkean Parlor and inviting the student to become familiar with the ongoing scholarly discourse and to add new material to this conversation. While there is much to commend this approach, new metaphors will refresh instructors' approach to information literacy and perhaps offer new avenues of inquiry.

² "Writing studies" in this paper will refer to the disciplines of Composition, Rhet/Comp, Technical and Professional Writing, etc.

however, each writing about and researching information literacy with little reference to the vocabulary, disciplinary conventions, and previous research of the other disciplines. As Heidi and Dale Jacobs put it, “When we talk only to those who teach what we teach, we run the risk of mistaking our part for the whole or thinking about what we teach in isolation from other forms and forums of teaching and learning” (72–73). Other disciplines than librarianship and writing studies have also published about information literacy, although on a much more basic level (Abowitz). We will only serve to enrich information literacy as a concept or as a sub-discipline when we bring in these multidisciplinary voices, increasing the vocabulary with which we can discuss information literacy, broadening the metaphors with which we view it, and approaching our pedagogy with more creativity.

Librarianship and writing studies are two disciplines that have traditionally been pushed to the outskirts of academia. In librarianship, this has frequently taken the form of librarians fighting for faculty status and recognition, often because they lack official standing within the curriculum. In writing studies, the preponderance of sections taught by adjunct instructors and graduate students has suggested that “real” English professors teach literature, while teaching writing is relegated to contingent or graduate instructors. James Elmborg writes, “Both writing instructors and library instructors in the early days were considered second-class professionals doing a job that involved ‘paying dues’ before being allowed to move into more prestigious positions” (68). Although there are obviously differences between them, both librarians and composition instructors have been expected by faculty members in other disciplines to instruct students in techniques rather than content; these other disciplines tend to view both information literacy and rhetoric/writing as skill sets rather than as possessing content knowledge. For rhetoric, this controversy reaches back to Plato and his discussion in the *Gorgias* of whether rhetoric is a “knack” or a “true art.” A “true art” implies mastery of content knowledge and the ability to generate new knowledge, while a “knack”

merely requires that one be able to manipulate words skillfully, and implies a lack of deeper understanding. Because these “knacks” require only surface knowledge and the ability to apply a set of rules, many faculty members in other disciplines expect students who have had introductory composition or an introduction to research to possess all of the necessary skills to write or research competently in subsequent coursework, especially coursework in their own disciplines even though studies (Norgaard; Wardle) have shown that we cannot take the transferability of these skills for granted.

As far back as 1982, Richard L. Larson argued that the assignment known as “the research paper” should no longer have a place in the composition class. He reasons that disciplines view “research” so differently that teaching students a single genre known as “the research paper” serves no useful purpose and may actually confuse them when they prepare to do research as their discipline knows it (Larson). This proposal, had librarians known of it, would have scared them to death, since a good part of their disciplinary identity derives from teaching information literacy as it relates to the research paper in composition classes. Since so little cross-disciplinary conversation goes on, however, librarians continued to visit composition classes in blissful unawareness.

Librarianship and Information Literacy

Even though the two disciplines share their position on the periphery of academia and the often-unreasonable expectation of preparing students for skilled, discipline-specific writing and research, they have usually taken disparate—though both valid and helpful—approaches to the subject area known as information literacy. Historically, librarians have interacted with the research process in higher education by going into the classroom and giving a “BI” (i.e. bibliographic instruction) session which usually served as an introduction

to the campus library. Information literacy developed in the 1980's out of these bibliographic instruction efforts of academic libraries. As computers began to connect libraries and other repositories of knowledge, and then to actually provide information via the internet, librarians realized that in addition to knowing how to use the local library, students would also need facility in dealing with their information needs in a more global fashion. Information literacy, then, developed from this desire to broaden the instruction students were receiving with both immediate academic needs and lifelong learning in mind (Gilton). With the advent of information literacy, librarians also saw the opportunity to define a portion of the curriculum which "belonged" to them, with outcomes, standards, and behaviors (just like a "real" discipline)³. Having come late to the table, though, librarians have had difficulty gaining institutional buy-in to the concept of information literacy as a key learning outcome, especially when it calls for actions beyond mere lip-service from administration or other departments outside the library's walls.

The concept of information literacy began in the library world and has remained there since, although many disciplines have begun to see the value of information literacy and to claim information literacy for their disciplines, with discipline-specific practices. The Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) has taken the lead in formalizing information literacy standards and outcomes for higher education. Most U.S. institutions of higher education accept the information literacy standards this body has published⁴. After the

³ See the ACRL Standards for Information Literacy.

⁴ The American Association of School Librarians (AASL), also affiliated with the American Library Association (ALA) has established information literacy standards for K-12 institutions. The two groups, ACRL and AASL have worked together to correlate the standards. The Big6 is an information seeking model, generally used with K-12 students, which incorporates the information literacy standards into six steps: task definition, information seeking strategies, location and access, use and information, synthesis, and evaluation.

initial idea of information literacy gained a foothold in the library world, librarians and disciplinary experts who saw the value of information literacy began to further refine the concept to meet specific disciplinary needs. The ACRL has established websites for many of these discipline-specific initiatives, including rhetoric and composition. Even though information literacy within the disciplines is now receiving more attention from the disciplines, librarians still perform the majority of the research and publishing on the topic. Of twenty-five articles in the bibliography on the ACRL “Information Literacy in Rhetoric & Composition” wiki, for example, all but six first appeared in library-related journals (“Information Literacy in Rhetoric & Composition Studies”). Although the skills involved in information literacy have long been a part of the curriculum in many introductory composition classes, the scholarly work has, until quite recently, for the most part been left to librarians.

Most librarians believe that information retrieval comprises only one small portion of the field of information literacy. Unfortunately, librarians generally receive very little time with a class and must give aid where it is most needed; writing professors generally expect that if librarians have time to teach only one skill, they should show students how to find the best or most important existing literature (Holliday and Fagerheim). This may be one reason that librarians tend to focus so much on the “how-to” of finding sources. Another reason is that the tech-savvy students now entering college often know only the basics of technology,

but not its subtleties, especially in the specific area of searching for sources. Although Google Scholar has somewhat eased the situation, databases often still “hide” the best sources.

Librarians feel they must introduce the students to the wealth of information not accessible to a quick and simple Google search and convince them that their time will be well-spent if they take a few additional minutes to dig more deeply.

As a result of these institutional- and classroom-level challenges and because information literacy teaching is often only one line on an over-long job description, librarians have at times been forced to reduce their teaching of information literacy to a quick introduction for students on how to find useful sources; they have left it to the compositionists to concentrate on helping students incorporate the sources into their own writing. To generalize broadly, if the skills involved in information fluency represent both art and science, librarians tend to concern themselves more with the science, while compositionists try to teach the art. Librarians ask objective questions: “Which database do we use?” “What are the best search terms?” “How should we combine search terms to narrow our focus?” Compositionists ask subjective questions about the extent to which a source should be cited, the stance the writer should take in relation to the source, and so on. This is a direct result of the time each discipline has with the students.

A study conducted in Australia lists three levels of information literacy often encountered in undergraduate classes. At the first, basic level—which we wish our students to move past—the students search for evidence only to validate their own opinions. These students have no real interest in actually learning about their topic, often because the class is a part of the general education, and therefore required, or because they have not allowed themselves enough time to fully engage with the writing and research processes. In level two, students concentrate on constructing an argument. This level shows increased maturity and facility with sources, and leads to level three, in which students actually apply what they have

learned to the knowledge they already possess or have recently gained in the class (Lupton). Obviously, we hope to assist students in moving from level one to level three during their university years.

As librarians discuss, study, research, and write on information literacy, we think along primarily pedagogical and argumentative lines: how can we best teach students the concepts of information literacy, and how can we convince them that finding good sources will reward the amount of additional time it takes? Librarians have published dozens of articles on presentation methods, scavenger hunts, tutorials, orientation ideas, search construction, and so forth. We write less frequently about the theory behind information literacy (i.e. do the five ACRL standards fully represent information literacy?), the nature of information currently available on the internet, in print, and within proprietary databases—other than teaching students how to evaluate it—or on how students should use sources once they have located them. Perhaps this is because a mental line between librarians and writing professionals has kept the librarians on the practical side of the line and yielded the theoretical side to compositionists.

James K. Elmborg traces the similar paths of historical writing instruction and library instruction, noting that writing instruction, because of required composition classes, successfully emerged as a new discipline, while library instruction in information literacy still struggles toward acceptance in the academy (69). In addition to the parallels between the disciplines, Elmborg also identifies differences. Primary among these is the lack of theoretical foundation (pedagogical and otherwise) informing information literacy teaching. He goes so far as to claim that “information literacy lacks the critical dimension it needs to work with WAC” (71). While librarians do tend to research and publish more practice than theory, some very good theoretical work has been and is being done to equip information literacy with a solid theoretical foundation. Barbara Fister and Wayne Bivens-Tatum, to name

just two, are both actively writing on information literacy theory and its rhetorical dimensions. Elmborg's own solution is to adapt process theory from composition to research, to introduce the idea of discourse communities into information literacy teaching, and to emulate the WAC model of enabling faculty in the disciplines to teach information literacy within their own disciplines.

Composition and Information Literacy

What, then, do writing professionals believe about information literacy? Barbara D'Angelo and Barry Maid have published a very helpful knol in which they present literature that begins to open up the space where information literacy and writing studies meet. They perceive that librarians create at least part of the divide when they teach research and citation techniques divorced from disciplinary (i.e. rhetorical) theory. They write:

Teaching research as information retrieval in the bibliographic instruction tradition valorizes retrieval as the purpose of research so that information becomes de-contextualized and solely about finding information, any information, related to the topic whether it is relevant or not. When information literacy is taught rhetorically, however, retrieval and evaluation of information are placed within the context of the audience, the argument to be made, and the evidence presented in support of the argument (D'Angelo and Maid).

Because the two disciplines are often called upon to be transferable, it is not unreasonable to ask librarians to consider rhetorical theory in their teaching of information literacy. In other words, while librarians would want to avoid couching all of their teaching in terms of history, or another content discipline, this is not the case with the discipline of rhetoric, since writing

studies are also to some extent transferable. Unfortunately, librarians have shown a tendency to be rhetorically tone-deaf. When students complain that they have heard the same library session in three different classes, we suspect that the librarian has not approached these sessions with the audience in mind, but has merely gone over the same how-to-search checklist in each class.

Barbara Fister, a librarian, and Joseph Bizup, a rhetorician, each address this issue in articles that provide a useful introduction to rhetorical information literacy pedagogy. Fister points out that students often enter college without an understanding of the purpose of research. If a student does research only to gather information on a topic and report that to a professor, or even worse, only to find a “source” to append to a paper, the student is much more likely to misuse sources by overquoting, plagiarizing, patchwriting, or misappropriating. When students understand that sources are available as building blocks upon which they can build their own arguments, they have a better chance to learn to successfully incorporate sources into their writing (Fister). Bizup advocates that in addition to showing students how to locate relevant sources, instructors should also teach them four rhetorical uses for sources, to which he affixes the acronym “BEAM.” Sources provide Background, offer material as Exhibits (or Examples), can furnish points for Argument, and can serve as models of Methodological practice. By identifying which of these purposes a given source serves, the student analyzes its rhetorical use in the paper (Bizup).

In his blog entitled *The Academic Librarian*, Wayne Bivens-Tatum discusses an article by Jennifer Nutefall and Phyllis Ryder which analyzes the different approaches that librarians and compositionists take toward student topic choice. He observes that librarians and writing specialists look at the research question differently. Librarians tend to want students to come to them with a focused research question because they can then assist the students in identifying keywords and finding resources on their topics. Writing specialists, on

the other hand, recommend that the student allow the research question to stay unfocused until relatively late in the writing process. They expect students to have done considerable preparatory reading before actually nailing down the topic (Bivens-Tatum).

Nutefall and Ryder, the authors of the article to which Bivens-Tatum refers in the blog entry above, make several guesses as to why this difference exists. They believe that librarians see students as more purposeful if they already have a topic (444), and that their own research focuses more on audience needs (445) than on the epistemic process in research. The authors also characterize librarians as more structured and methodical (446). They do not, however, hit upon another essential reason for the difference in the ways that librarians and compositionists view topic choice. Because librarians can observe students during much of their research process, they have knowledge about the process that composition instructors lack or overlook. Undergraduate research, especially in lower-division or general education courses, bears almost no resemblance to the research that professors did in their graduate courses and continue to do as members of the academy, and which they tend to call to mind when they ask their students to do research. Instructors may envision their students engrossed in the masters of the discipline while synthesizing their own new thesis, but this rarely matches the reality of the undergraduate research process, especially in general education courses. While graduate students do often allow their writing process to influence their topic choice, undergraduates rarely leave themselves enough breathing room to do this kind of exploration. When they start the paper twenty-four hours or less before its due date, reading, summarizing, and learning will be sacrificed to efficacy and word-count inflation. Unfortunately, the process of teaching undergraduate information literacy breaks down with this misunderstanding, because much of the teaching envisions the first, more idealistic model of research that rarely occurs.

Many first-year composition do not do much preparatory reading; they do not even read most sources that they cite. Far from being current in the conversations within a discipline, these students generally have yet to realize that a conversation even takes place. The Citation Project's findings confirm this; although the researchers chose schools of varying types, from community colleges to Ivy League schools, the results were remarkably consistent across type of institution (Jamieson and Moore Howard). Most librarians can relate example after example of students coming in on the day that a paper is due and asking for help in finding sources. The paper is already written; the students just need sources to fulfill the requirements of the assignment and to support their own positions. Both disciplines need to begin with addressing this last-minute "research" behavior as we seek to educate students about discovering, then understanding, then participating in the conversation.

Place: Search & Shelter

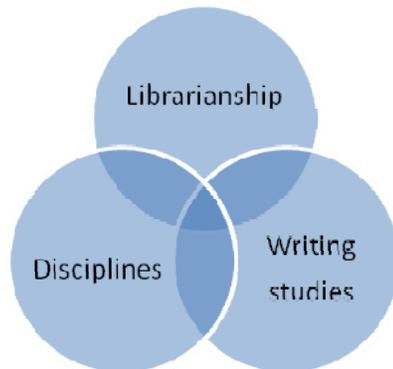
In spite of different approaches to information literacy, both disciplines have traditionally used metaphors of place to describe to students the activities and goals of information literacy. In Lakoff and Johnson's *Metaphors We Live By*, the authors demonstrate that the metaphors with which we discuss various ideas are so built in to cultures that they become invisible (Lakoff and Johnson 14). If we shift the metaphor slightly, we may be able to rejuvenate the over-familiar phrases that have become clichéd. While the metaphor of conversation is still useful in information literacy, perhaps a new metaphorical emphasis on place will establish a more disciplinarily-inclusive environment for information literacy. In a way similar to that in which Lakoff and Johnson tease out metaphors and implications surrounding a certain concept, I would like to begin to unearth metaphors of place that are, or could be, employed in our discussions of information literacy. Place and

space are often used interchangeably, and with the advent of environmental consciousness and ecological criticism, place studies have become a subdiscipline in many fields. Here I wish to use “place” in a way that implies a weak binary with “space.” As opposed to “space,” “place” has borders (one would know whether or not she was in that place), it has a definite name, and there is perhaps even a sense of comfort, familiarity, or hominess.

Two aspects of the spatial metaphor are often applied to information literacy. The most familiar and common of the information literacy place metaphors is the search. The hunt, the quest, the discovery of new territory that can be mapped, are all expressions that are common in describing the teaching of information literacy. Librarians help students “find” sources, as if they were lost items or undiscovered territory. In the past, this discovery was often literal, since most researchers initially found a card “hidden” in one of hundreds of drawers among thousands of identical-looking cards, which identified an item that someone then had to “track down” within the library. Students of today more commonly locate both their citations and their sources themselves within cyberspace—yet another spatial metaphor—though they still tend to need librarians as guides to some of the intricacies of this territory, in order to transform the vastness of that space into a place that can be negotiated. Whether virtual or actual, much of the reference librarian’s task remains a hunt for information, one that can intrigue, educate, and capture the imagination.

Librarians have traditionally used spatial metaphors in teaching students to locate sources; most readers will probably remember hearing at least one librarian describe the Venn diagram. The Venn diagram, borrowed from set theory and related to Boolean searching, allows students to visualize the relationships between related subjects, for example,

librarianship, writing studies, and other



disciplines.

By using the visual representation students may be familiar with from basic set theory, librarians hope to help students construct appropriately broad or narrow searches. Natural language searching may be resulting in a decrease in the teaching of Venn diagrams in information literacy teaching, but in many undergraduate information literacy sessions, librarians still teach the students how to use “and,” “or,” and “not” to appropriately focus Boolean searches.

In recent years, librarians have become more aware of another type of graphic representation, the concept map; some database vendors such as Credo and Ebsco promote it as helpful in invention or for visual learners. Google has introduced the Wonder Wheel tool as a concept map for its own searches. When students search a term in the database, the concept map breaks the term down into its component parts to allow them to visualize both the relationship of these parts to each other and the possibilities for specialization within the topic. Compositionists have been using the concept map for invention for some time; students are invited to begin with an idea they wish to write about and then to branch out to connected concepts, perspectives, and situations. In this way, each of the two disciplines has appropriated a similar tool for slightly different purposes. Although librarians have tended to suggest that the concept map will help in facilitating topic narrowing and compositionists

have tended to highlight it as an aid in invention, faculty in either area could reverse or remix the traditional uses while still keeping the map. The concept map serves a different function than the Venn diagram; the Venn diagram attempts to illustrate set theory, commonalities, overlap, and uniqueness, while the concept map shows relationships, tangents, and possible connections. Both, however, attempt to visually portray ideas as “territories” which may share borders or even overlap with related idea-territories.

The second type of place metaphor relating to information literacy is “shelter,” in the sense of an enclosed place, with connotations of protection and support. In the traditional model of information literacy instruction, once students have located their sources, the role of guide passes to the writing instructor, who assists the students in making a place-* for incorporation of the ideas which they have gleaned from the source into their own writing. That is, the instructor deals with space within the essay. How much of the source can the student incorporate without committing the act of plagiarism? How should citations be formatted and inserted into the document? Should students use footnotes or endnotes? These practical questions hover on the surface, sometimes obscuring deeper questions relating to the students’ positioning of ideas in their own thinking. Will the stronger sources eclipse the student’s own work? Will the student’s own preconceived bias serve to crowd out any real interaction with the sources?

If we back up a step, however, we find that in classical rhetoric, sources have a strong connection to place even earlier in the writing process. The word for “places” in Greek is *topoi*; Aristotle suggests using these “places” (i.e. *topoi*) to find the best available means of persuasion. In fact, the word “commonplace” became associated with rhetoric via Aristotle’s division of the *topoi* into “common” and “special.” Thus, one searched for lines of argument in “places” with which one was familiar; skill in rhetoric involved easy familiarity with many such places. For example, Aristotle lists such *topoi* as: possible and impossible; whether

something has happened; what is to be; size and smallness; and greater and lesser (Aristotle Ch. 2.19). Each of these has possible sub-topics, for example, “Of that whose end is possible, so is the beginning,” and “If a thing can come about without skill and preparation, then it is all the more possible through skill and elaboration” (Ch. 2.19). Aristotle also uses this term for the description of certain forms or types of arguments; in this way, one would find a “place”—today we might call it a “stance”—from which to address the opponent’s arguments (“Aristotle’s Rhetoric” 7). We can think of *topoi*, then, as places where we might find the ground firm enough to construct a solid foundation for our argument. Foundation is essential for any shelter, and the stronger the foundation, the stronger the resulting structure. A solid knowledge of the rhetorical *topoi* used to be considered essential for beginning rhetoric students; that kind of rote learning has largely disappeared, but an introduction to the most effective lines of argument, including argument from authoritative sources, should still be a part of the writing curriculum.

Topoi are linked in Aristotle with enthymemes, which have been defined variously as either syllogisms with a proposition missing, or as syllogisms treating probability rather than certainty. Aristotle’s “available means” often involved arguments which, while convincing, are not or cannot be proven with certainty. Aristotle gave examples of how to suit the persuasion to the audience, as when old men and young men would be swayed by different lines of reasoning (cf. 2.12–2.13). Even with the addition of audience consideration that Aristotle demonstrates here, the idea of “looking” in certain “places” in order to convince certain audiences demonstrates the relation of *topoi* and enthymemes. Especially as they relate to building ethos, sources resemble *topoi* in the sense that the choice to identify with a given source and its author’s authority will vary based on context. As a very specific example, in this essay written for the discipline of composition, I cite the writings of librarians as

sources, but I also very consciously cite rhet/comp sources and authors, for fear that my own authority will be questioned if I fail to choose the proper authority for the context.

Another occasion for the use of place in rhetoric is through the rhetorical canon of memory. Popularized by the Roman orators, the concept of the treasure-house of memory suggests that rhetors associate a place in a building or neighborhood with the item that they wish to recall. By mentally retracing the path through the building, the orators “find” the points of the argument where they “left” them. This application of the place-memory link relates directly to the actual performance of a speech, but the Romans developed the early techniques of mnemonics relating to any subject around this metaphor (Bergmann). As professionals and researchers, we have learned to develop similar memory connections, but with new tools for recall. We store a few of the most recent or most influential sources in our own memory. We may use a citation help such as Zotero or Refworks to store more. Before computers, researchers had files and note cards. All of these, in a way, help to construct our contemporary version of the house of memory, developed as a result of writing, that memory-defeater that Plato distrusted. While we have, we must admit, in some ways substituted the house of memory, in which we reside, for the toolbox of memory, which is outside of ourselves, and at our disposal, we still inhabit that primary home. Without our own memories to send us in the right direction, we would not know where in our toolboxes to begin to look. Our students, however, mostly begin their college careers with few or none of these files—of any type—at their own disposal.

Even literal, physical places feature prominently in our thinking about information literacy. Teaching information literacy often involves a change of place; either the class goes to the library, or the librarian “invades” the normally private classroom. This disruption signals to the students that something out-of-the-ordinary is taking place. The students must wonder why their instructor is yielding her place to an interloper. Does the instructor not

know how to do research in her own discipline? Librarians often meet with this same objection from the instructors themselves, who wonder why they need a librarian to teach their classes something as simple and obvious as finding sources for a research paper. On the other hand, librarians rely on instructors' generosity with classroom space and time because they normally do not have a curriculum devoted to the library; thus "borrowing" a class is the only way they can impart their own disciplinary knowledge to the students. Recently, librarians have begun to push into the compositionists "territory." Writing centers in the library and even run by librarians are becoming more and more frequent. Librarians with second Masters' degrees in English proliferate among the adjunct ranks.

Librarians, frankly, are on the run. Prognosticators have predicted the demise of the library for a few decades now, but at no time have these promises loomed more gloomily than in these days of ebooks for the first time outselling print books and newspapers going out of business every week. Part of the librarians' interest in composition may result from a desire to stave off their profession's slow decline. Rather than viewing this sharing of space as trespassing or infringement, however, both the instructor and the librarian would be better served to consciously model for the students the cross-disciplinary hospitality that can enrich their own scholarship. Compositionists can welcome librarians' technical fluency and broad knowledge of the universe of information sources; librarians must embrace the rhetorical know-how of the compositionists who demonstrate their value to the academy in part by teaching students the discourse conventions they will need to navigate the cyber-discourse they will engage in for the rest of their professional lives.

Although in the end, both disciplines' aim is to produce skilful writers, each discipline is also using information as a battleground in the fight for disciplinary survival. Composition still struggles to solidify its footing away from the mother-discipline of English, but librarianship is fighting for its life. Not only are librarians searching for their own territory

upon which to build a solid stance, they desperately need shelter from the forces that seek to destroy the discipline, and they have been searching for it in the idea of information literacy.

Implications

Inevitably, such theoretical musings as these lead to the “so what” question. What implications for teaching are suggested by thinking of sources as *topoi*? Many librarians have had encounters with students who have written papers and *then* come to a librarian for help with adding sources—as the last step in the writing process. When a student comes to the librarian’s office with a complete paper and asks for three sources since the paper is due today, the student has not grasped the rhetorical purpose of research for writing. In fact, if students see the paper as one portion of the assignment and the sources as another, with little connection between them, this would probably come as absolutely no surprise to either the librarian or the composition instructor. Perhaps we even reinforce this belief when the composition instructor teaches the “paper” and the librarian teaches the “sources.” Sources do not merely decorate a paper; without key sources, the student often cannot effectively advance an argument, nor does the student really learn how to present and interact with others’ points of view.

When Aristotle defined rhetoric as “finding the best available means of persuasion,” one of the means that he certainly had in mind was the array of *topoi*. I wonder how it might change our teaching if we introduced to our students a place-memory approach to writing. When presented with a rhetorical situation, the student would mentally move through the rooms of the house she, her instructor, and her classmates had “constructed” during her rhetorical apprenticeship in the composition classroom. Each mnemonic room would “contain” an important tool for constructing the argument; in several of these rooms, the tool

would relate to the use of sources. For example, in one room, the source might provide expert verification of the author's beliefs. In another, a source might provide an example for a point the author is trying to make, and in yet another, a source might serve as a foil or counter-argument. When Aristotle recommends that the rhetor find the best of the available means of persuasion, he intends that orators would already have some knowledge of the tools at their disposal. If students enter the university without these tools, one of the first tasks of the writing instructor and the librarian should be to show the student what they are and how to use them. In the metaphor of the treasure-house, the introductory composition class could build a cabin (i.e. explore a few tools), and second-semester composition could add on several rooms, in addition to reviewing and reinforcing the use of the tools in the rooms of the original cabin. Further academic writing, including writing in the disciplines, would repeat these steps recursively.

This metaphor of building with a foundation and rooms brings out an aspect of information literacy instruction that we often fail to address because in so many cases it is a given. The fact that librarians are usually given one class session does not allow enough time for the concrete in the foundation to set; perhaps this pushes the metaphor too far, but building is a gradual and deliberate process. Imagine a librarian with a second Master's degree in Religion who teaches a class in Biblical Hermeneutics which involves using language sources to develop a word study research paper. Because of her double role as both professor and librarian, she builds information literacy into her lesson plans, taking her class to the library and instructing them there several times during the semester. This would be done when necessary or helpful for the class's current projects, not just once during the semester. Perhaps this approach does more for the students in terms of both content learning and learning the research process than the traditional one-shot, taught by an unfamiliar person, often in an unfamiliar place, for a reason which may not have been made clear—or may have

been because the professor wished to attend a conference that day. Of course, not every librarian has a second subject Master's, but many do. If there is no one with such a joint disciplinary background, many schools are experimenting with the idea of an embedded librarian, one who comes to the class for many or all class sessions, making herself available for team teaching and for assistance in working with sources on an as-needed basis.

In addition to needing familiarity with the various rhetorical *topoi* relating to sources, university students need to build knowledge, both disciplinary and general. While professors and researchers have spent years reading in their disciplines, the students have not. Many of them have not yet chosen a disciplinary home, nor do they yet have an extensive knowledge of general information to build upon. Might we spend some class time in conversations about what it means to be building disciplinary knowledge, to practice sharing (others') research with one another, and to introduce citation software that students could maintain after the semester ended? Even if there were conversations about disciplines that students did not choose as major areas of study, they would gain an introduction to those disciplines. By sharing research with the class, students would learn how to read and summarize research more advanced than they are capable of doing themselves; by "teaching" it to their classmates, they would reinforce their knowledge of it, and the class would end up with a diverse sampling of research they had been acquainted with.

Rather than attempting to teach the students the vagaries of MLA, APA, or Turabian, only to have them realize later that they will need to master another citation style for their discipline of choice, giving each of them an account to citation software which would be theirs throughout their university career would allow them to begin to build up a library of sources which would begin to serve as foundations of disciplinary knowledge. Once students settle in to a discipline, having a wide selection of sources that they have already familiarized

themselves with will give them a strong starting point for further, deeper research as upperclassmen.

The teaching of rhetorical appeals should also involve the incorporation of sources. We often refer to using sources as a means of providing evidence for the logical appeal (*logos*). Once students are experienced with finding sources for this purpose, we can move on to sources that might help with the emotional (*pathos*) appeal to the audience—a well-chosen narrative example will often help the argument to register with the audience on a deeper emotional level and will remain in their memories for a longer time. Finally, sources can also add to the writer's *ethos*; citing the “correct” sources and experts demonstrates some time spent with and knowledge of the topic, and showing that a well-respected figure in the field supports the writer's argument gives her reasoning additional ethical force.

Earlier I mentioned cross-disciplinary hospitality, in terms of welcoming those from other disciplines into our classrooms. Modeling this within the class, even in a general education class, will demonstrate for students that other disciplines' approaches to issues can be not only viable, but helpful and insightful. Demonstrating an interdisciplinary conversation for them can show how different vocabularies access issues from different, yet equally valuable, problem-solving methodologies. While this kind of conversation might naturally begin between writing instructor and librarian, it does not have to end there. Bringing a librarian, a compositionist, an ethicist, and a sociologist together to update a class on their disciplines' latest research in a topic like plagiarism would exemplify the contribution to solving this problem that each discipline can make. While an interdisciplinary conversation about sources in research would be a great place to start, it could lead to interdisciplinary encounters on other writing topics and even on various other issues relevant to the class.

The simple Google search will continue to be a chief competitor to deeper information literacy knowledge, though, until student culture relaxes its demand for immediate gratification. As long as some professors are willing to accept poor sources, students will continue to try to get away with citing them. As long as students can get a quick “A” on a paper without really learning about a topic, we are fighting an uphill battle. The key is to build desire for increased knowledge. Any website can serve as a source, but fewer can really teach the student about the subject at hand—and then only if the student will take the time to linger there and read. As librarians and compositionists continue to work together to send students in search of knowledge instead of in search of “three sources,” the references that the students cite may improve.

This exploration of the disciplinary issues of information literacy has only raised some questions; much research by both librarians and compositionists remains to be done by those involved with Project Information Literacy, The Citation Project, and independent researchers. If both the library and the writing instructor send the same message to students to use sources as *topoi*, students can begin to build a strong foundation of knowledge both inside and outside of their chosen disciplines. They can learn to structure their arguments based on the best available rhetorical tools. Lastly, they can begin to familiarize themselves with important voices in their disciplines in their roles as speakers within the disciplinary discourse, rather than as meaningless names in a bibliography tacked on to the end of a paper that contains merely that student’s opinion.

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