



# LOW HANGING FRUIT

## Freshmen & Research at the University of Idaho Library

By Diane Prorak

"My first thought was that it was huge." This is the reaction of one fairly typical first-year student to the UI Library. It's the biggest library many new students have ever visited. Another typical comment, "Different set up than what I am used to," refers to academic libraries using the Library of Congress call number system rather than the Dewey Decimal System.

Many freshmen say they have only done research on the Internet and many do not know searching and evaluation techniques that can help them find relevant and high-quality sources. Some new students report that they have never done a research paper, but within the first few weeks of school, many freshman at UI will be assigned one.

Through our library instruction program, some will have class sessions that help them with this potentially daunting task, but some will not. Perhaps they are not taking a course that typically has a library instruction component (e.g. English 102), or a professor may assume the students know how to do library research. Librarians reach out to students in many settings (orientation, online, social media, in the library) to let students know that they can get research assistance almost any time. However, some students are still overwhelmed.

Here are some ways you can help them be ready for college research:

1. Introduce students to LiLI article databases. Requiring sources that are more edited than websites will get them ready to use the library databases available in college libraries and necessary for college research. Students who use LiLI article databases in high school nod in recognition when we introduce them to ours.
2. Teach students to evaluate every source they consider for a project. Instruct them to be very skeptical; ask hard questions about possible bias or accuracy; and use the [CRAAP](#) test criteria (Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy & Purpose).
3. Teach students to ask for help. The college library may seem huge, or organized with a strange call number system. But because information is a changing, complicated world, no one knows how to find all the information they need. Librarians are there to help—REALLY. They actually want to help! We tell our students: Don't waste time—ask!

Find out more about what UI librarians teach our English 102 students about research at <http://libguides.uidaho.edu/engl102> or contact Diane Prorak, Library Instruction Coordinator at UI Library at [prorak@uidaho.edu](mailto:prorak@uidaho.edu).



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### LINKS TO MORE LEARNING



#### University of Idaho Library:

The University of Idaho Library houses several exception collections including the International Jazz Collections and an ever-growing searchable digital collection.

<http://www.lib.uidaho.edu/index.html>

#### Purdue OWL—Writing a Research Paper:

This primer at the ever-reliable Purdue OWL site addresses, research, writing and other ins and outs of writing a research paper. An excellent place to start.

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/owlprint/658/>

#### Kathy Schrock's Critical Evaluation of Information:

Here there are website evaluation tools for every grade level with lesson plans, examples, and sites to help you demonstrate the usefulness of this skill.

<http://www.schrockguide.net/critical-evaluation.html>

### PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS



#### Learning Express Library

LEL is a large collection of practice tests, tutorials and ebooks to improve basic skills, prepare for college, or get ready to move to a career. It's organized in multiple learning centers with resources to practice skills from math basics to logic and reasoning, along with writing reading, grammar, and test-taking skills.

Whether it's catching up on skills or challenging a student to move ahead, LEL is will help ready students for college and career. Read about more about the tools in the **Digital Tools** below.

### DIGITAL TOOLS



#### LearningExpress Library

[School Center](#) – tutorials and practice on major education topics like Math, grammar, writing, reading, and more. 4th grade & up.

[College Preparation Center](#) – practice tests and tutorials for AP Exams, SAT, and ACT.

[Career Center](#) – practice materials for technical career education, materials to prepare for occupation exams in military, civil service, healthcare, teaching, and many more.

[Popular Software Skills Center](#) – tutorials for word processing, presentation, spreadsheet, and other tools for college and the work.

<http://lili.org/collegecareer>



