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Over the last 25 years, library instruction has come to include not only teaching students how to find sources, but also how to critically evaluate information. A common place for such instruction is the composition classroom, but little research has been done to learn about the attitudes of composition faculty in regards to teaching students these skills. Through interviews with composition instructors in North Carolina State University's first-year writing program (FYWP), this study sought to learn about the attitudes of composition instructors towards teaching students to evaluate sources, including what students should learn and who should teach them. Participants' responses indicate that composition instructors want their students to be able to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources and develop a basic understanding of the context of scholarly communication. In addition, most participants believed that some form of collaboration with the library was the best way to teach source evaluation.

Headings:

Information literacy

Librarian-teacher cooperation

Academic libraries -- Relations with faculty & curriculum

WHAT DO COMPOSITION FACULTY WANT THEIR STUDENTS TO LEARN?
EXAMINING SOURCE EVALUATION

by
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Introduction

The practice of teaching students to find and evaluate information has been known by many names: bibliographic instruction, library instruction, library orientation, information literacy instruction. Much research has been devoted to the subject, especially as students now have easy access to an ever-growing wealth of information. Researchers have studied how to increase student learning and understanding of information literacy (IL) content, but less commonly have studied the non-library faculty who are arranging IL instruction for their students. IL instruction rarely takes place independently of for-credit coursework; commonly, a course instructor asks a librarian to teach an IL session, though sometimes IL instruction may be required by a school's general education program, sometimes as a stand-alone, for-credit IL course. Often, however, the instruction librarian is generally invited to temporarily join a class in progress. Depending on the library with which they're working, faculty members may have varying levels of input in the content of the IL instruction given to their classes.

IL instruction can encompass many aspects of finding information and using it, including the evaluation of information found. In terms of critical thinking, this aspect may be the most important one of all. In most cases, while students may feel overwhelmed and lacking in direction before instruction, after instruction, students have little trouble finding information. The trouble is in choosing credible, high-quality information. This issue may be one of the most important issues in IL instruction: what is

the purpose of teaching students to find information if the information sources they find

are not credible? In the effort to help students find high-quality sources, libraries have

developed online guides, checklists, and web tutorials to help students evaluate the

information they find. One of the most well-known is California State University,

Chico's CRAAP test, a checklist for evaluating sources on currency, relevance, authority,

accuracy, and purpose. This checklist has been reused and recycled by libraries all over

the world.

Literature Review

Definitions of IL and IL instruction

Librarians have a long history of teaching their patrons how to use the library's resources, and this instruction has been especially important in academic libraries as incoming students are confronted with a more complex library system than they are likely accustomed to using. While "bibliographic instruction" was the term traditionally used to denote students' instruction in using the library and going through the research process, that term fell out of fashion in the 1990s, and now the more commonly used term is "information literacy instruction." While bibliographic instruction often sought to develop students' critical thinking skills, the term "IL instruction" reflects a greater emphasis on library instruction as a way of developing students' critical thinking skills. This focus can be seen in a 1989 report released by the American Library Association's Presidential Committee on Information Literacy, which argued that "To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information." The standards developed in 2000 by the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL), a division of the American Library Association, reflect the complexity of the world of information today's students face. This document provides both an outline of what constitutes IL, citing the Presidential Committee's definition, and how to assess it in an individual learner. There are five standards, including the one most relevant to this research proposal, standard three, which states, "The information literate student

evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system." ACRL's newest document on information literacy, the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, also references the need to evaluate information in the frame "Authority is constructed and contextual," which notes that "Information resources reflect their creators' expertise and credibility, and are evaluated based on the information need and the context in which the information will be used." ACRL's 2000 *Standards* have shaped the development of IL programs in higher education, especially as these programs relate to critical thinking, and the 2015 *Framework* opens a way to renew the conversation going into the future.

Critical thinking in IL instruction

As library instruction has moved beyond simply showing patrons how to use the library, the focus has shifted to encouraging students' critical thinking skills. As Ellis and Whatley (2008) observed, this trend began in the mid-1980s, and the conversation has been ongoing since then. Some key articles illustrate the trend. Though her article predated the ALA report, Bodi (1988) was consistent with its definition of IL when she argued that bibliographic instruction at the college or university level, through the process of teaching students to find information, can nurture and reinforce the critical thinking skills that are an essential part of a college education. The integration of critical thinking and IL has varied; as Atton (1994) and Wesley (1991) noted, many of the first classes to intentionally combine bibliographic instruction and critical thinking focused on teaching students information-finding skills first and then applying critical thinking skills. Atton argued, however, that critical thinking should be the foundation of bibliographic instruction.

One application of critical thinking skills is evaluating sources for credibility and relevance. As students have come to rely on the open Web and Google for their information needs, many librarians and teaching faculty feel that students need guidance on source evaluation. Therefore, library instruction often includes an evaluation component. For many years, librarians have advocated the use of checklists such as the CRAAP test mentioned above, but in recent years, many have advocated for a different approach. For example, Borrelli and Johnson (2012) described a collaboration between a required first-year experience course and the library which included required completion of three online modules focusing on source evaluation. Pre- and post-tests showed an overall improvement in students' ability to evaluate sources' credibility (Borrelli & Johnson, 2012). Other instruction has included the use of pop culture examples to model the evaluation thought process. Decarie (2012), who is a business communications instructor and not a librarian, created an assignment called "The Dead (?) Celebrity Assignment" in which students are asked to give a presentation about "the falsely reported death of a celebrity or person of note" that was reported by at least one credible news source (p. 169). The assignment requires the students to think critically about what makes a source credible and why the public chooses to trust some information sources over others. As a result, students "are thinking more carefully about the information they find, especially online" (p. 171). DeGroot (2011), a public speaking instructor, described a similar exercise in which students read urban legends and decide whether or not they believe them and why. After the students evaluate the legends, they read explanations proving or disproving the legends, and then the students discuss the spread of untrue narratives and the importance of verifying information (p. 88). These activities, in

departing from the checklist approach, encourage students to think critically about the information they find and use "information to evaluate information" (Meola, 2004, p. 342).

IL and first-year composition – collaboration

IL instruction has long taken place within the context of the first-year composition course. This collaboration is likely based at least partly on practical considerations: many incoming students take composition courses, and research-based writing has long held a major place in composition curriculum. In addition, both composition and IL focus on critical thinking, making collaboration logical. As Jacobs and Jacobs (2009) noted, composition instruction and IL instruction share an overall goal: "to help students develop a set of habits of mind through which they become self-reflective, flexible, and critical" (p. 74). In composition, such critical thinking habits are focused on types of discourse and "discourse situations," and in IL, students apply critical thinking to "information and different informational situations" (p. 74). With such similar goals, it is not surprising that Birmingham et al. (2008), in a survey of composition faculty, found that a majority of composition faculty do value their students' IL skills, and many faculty are already doing activities in their classrooms to promote students' IL development. According to Birmingham et al. (2008), librarians seeking to promote IL at their institutions should look to composition faculty as allies and seek ways to collaborate with them. This collaboration can take many forms, usually differentiated by how much time a librarian spends with a class. One of the most common ways of delivering IL instruction is the "one-shot" session, in which a librarian meets with a class for one session only. As Watson et al. (2013) noted, these sessions can often be overwhelming for students, as

they are exposed to a lot of information in a very short time, and frustrating for the librarians who are trying to convey so much information to the students. Yet despite this major flaw, one-shot sessions are often all that are possible because of staffing and scheduling constraints. Though a librarian may meet with a class only once, there is still a chance for librarian-faculty collaboration. Watson et al. (2013) described one such collaboration in which a team of composition faculty and librarians performed a year-long lesson study in order to overhaul the one-shot session. Through careful observation of one-shot instruction sessions, Watson et al. (2013) concluded that to be successful, a one-shot session need to be student focused, with sufficient time for active learning exercises. In addition, librarians and composition faculty need to communicate their expectations for the session clearly.

In some cases, librarians can be a major part of composition curriculum development. Alfino, Pajer, Pierce and Jenks (2008) described a faculty-librarian partnership in which librarians were an integral part of an instruction team for a set of linked first-year thought and expression classes. These librarians helped to develop assignments that supported the courses' critical thinking goals through the integration of IL with other course instruction. McMillen and Hill (2005) outlined a similar collaboration in which composition faculty and librarians, following an assessment of first-year students' argument papers, restructured how the composition program and the library approached the research paper. Both composition faculty and instruction librarians used the model of "showing students how to converse with scholarly texts" (McMillen & Hill, 2005, p. 6). An ideal time to begin integrating IL and composition classes seems to be when composition curriculum is undergoing revision at a given institution. Holliday

and Fagerheim (2006) described a collaboration between composition faculty and librarians during a curriculum revision which allowed IL to be integrated formally into a two-course composition sequence where it had previously been only a popular option for composition faculty. The new IL curriculum for the first-year courses consisted of four lessons, two of which took place in the library, while the other two took place in the classroom. In contrast, the second-year composition course, which did not have a standardized curriculum, offered faculty a choice of lessons along with a rationale of how these lessons could support course learning objectives.

Faculty perceptions of IL instruction

Given the rate of collaboration between librarians and faculty (both composition and non-composition), it is worth considering how non-librarian faculty view IL instruction. The literature suggests a mixture of both positive and negative faculty attitudes towards IL and its instruction. DaCosta (2010), summarizing previous research on faculty attitudes toward IL, noted that "Faculty generally agree on the importance of IL but need more of a push to truly embrace it within the curriculum" (p. 203-4). The research of Bury (2011), who conducted a study of faculty at a Canadian university, supports DaCosta's conclusion. Bury found that while faculty do view IL competencies as important, slightly over half of the respondents who did incorporate IL instruction taught it themselves, just over a third collaborated with a librarian, and a tenth let the librarian teach the material independently. However, a majority of respondents supported faculty-librarian collaboration regardless of whether they actually collaborated with a librarian. Similarly, while exploring social sciences and engineering faculty attitudes toward IL instruction, McGuinness (2006) found that faculty in these disciplines believed

that their programs of study were already teaching IL skills. In addition, faculty attributed students' failure to become information literate to their own lack of motivation to develop in this area. However, faculty also expected students to pick up these skills on their own over the course of their education. McGuinness concluded that "IL has not yet become a priority for academic faculty" (p. 580). Such conclusions are troubling for librarians hoping to collaborate with faculty to develop students' IL skills.

Not all research conducted on faculty attitudes has drawn such bleak conclusions. Manuel, Beck, and Molloy (2005), in a study investigating faculty from a variety of disciplines who did choose to embrace IL instruction in their courses, found that faculty believed that their students generally do not possess necessary library research skills. In addition, respondents felt that IL instruction was foundational for students' general college success. In addition, a majority of respondents asked librarians to teach IL sessions because librarians are experts on information and research skills. Examining the negative perceptions in light of the positive attitudes uncovered in Manuel, Beck, and Molloy's study suggests that genuinely effective IL instruction is certainly possible; what is needed is both greater faculty outreach and a greater understanding of what faculty want from IL instruction.

Research Question

While there has been much research devoted to the role of critical thinking in IL instruction and faculty attitudes towards IL instruction, there has been little published on the specific issue of faculty attitudes towards teaching students to evaluate sources. In light of this gap, this research project seeks to answer the following questions:

1) When it comes to teaching first-year composition students how to evaluate sources, what content do composition faculty want to be included?

2) Who should deliver this content – librarians or composition instructors?

Methods

Overview of chosen method

IL instruction itself has often been assessed with quantitative measures, such as examining students' scores on pre- and post-tests and counting the number and type of sources students use after library instruction, and those quantitative measures certainly fit those types of questions. As King and Horrocks (2011) noted, "Quantitative research is concerned with measurement, precisely and accurately capturing aspects of the social world that are then expressed in numbers – percentages, probability values, variance ratios, etc." (p. 7). Student scores and numbers of citations lend themselves perfectly to numerical measurement. Survey results can also be measured quantitatively, especially if the survey is administered over a large population (Silverman, 2005). However, when seeking to understand attitudes and perceptions, purely quantitative measures are often limited in what they can reveal, which is why the qualitative method of interviewing was used for this project. Rather than looking for correlations or statistical significance, the research conducted sought to understand "phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them" (McIntyre, 2005, p. 210). Because the purpose of this research was to uncover faculty attitudes and perceptions towards a limited area of IL instruction, and because the scope was limited both by time and geography, the research focused on qualitative interviews, seeking depth and nuance rather than generalizability – in essence, focusing on a small group and beginning a conversation that could be continued in the future.

Data collection

Based upon time and location constraints, it was not feasible to choose a random sample of the population chosen for this study (Berg, 2001). The population was a convenience sample in that following approval of this study by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Institutional Review Board, FYWP instructors at North Carolina State University, both graduate teaching assistants and faculty, were recruited. With the help of the NCSU undergraduate outreach librarian, an existing email list was used to send out an invitation to all FYWP faculty inviting them to participate, and interviews were scheduled with those who responded (see Appendix C for the recruiting email). Six participants responded and were interviewed, resulting in six usable interview transcripts. A more thorough description of the study participants is below.

Because the goal was to uncover participants' attitudes and perceptions, which can be very individual, the interviews were semi-structured, starting with pre-set questions but with freedom to modify the questions throughout the course of the interview based on the interviewee's responses (Luo & Wildemuth, 2009). As McIntyre (2005) noted, "The best qualitative interviews are guided not by the researchers but by the interviewees" (p. 222). Therefore, a list of topics and questions was devised (see Appendix A), but these were not adhered to rigidly; rather, conversation, particularly follow-up questions, was allowed to develop somewhat naturally (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In order to capture the interviews most fully, after informed consent was obtained, the interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then erased after transcription. All identifying information was removed from the transcripts, and the transcript files were

kept in a password-protected folder on the researcher's computer. In order to maintain confidentiality, the transcripts are not included in this paper.

Limitations and the Potential for Bias

There is some potential for bias in this study, and the researcher took measures to minimize these. One potential for bias lies in the convenience sample. As Leacock, Warrican, and Rose (2009) noted, there may be important differences between those who volunteer and those who do not, leading to a sample that is biased. In the case of this study, those who volunteered were likely those who already had opinions on the issue of evaluating sources. Participants may also have volunteered because they had met the researcher previously through her work as an intern in the library instruction program, meaning that participants were already likely to sign up for library instruction. Finally, participants may have been unwilling to express any negative opinions about library instruction if the researcher had also been the one to instruct their classes. The researcher attempted to offset these potential biases by getting a mix of instructor types (both graduate students and faculty) and recruiting participants from the program at large, not just those whom she already knew. Additionally, no questions were asked that explicitly required participants to evaluate library instruction, though there were opportunities to express negative opinion. Finally, this project is not intended to be universal in scope; it is not assumed that the population studied is representative of all composition instructors.

Data analysis

Once all of the interviews were completed and transcribed, the formal analysis of the transcripts began. Before the data was analyzed, it was first coded. Rubin and Rubin (1995) described coding as "the process of grouping interviewees' responses into

categories that bring together the similar ideas, concepts, or themes you have discovered, or steps or stages in a process" (p. 238). King and Horrocks (2010) offered some guidelines for identifying themes: a theme is something that is repeated, distinct, and relevant to the research question. The goal of identifying these themes was to develop an interpretation of how the data relates to the research question (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Descriptive coding was the first step, identifying the parts of the transcript relevant to the research question and then deciding upon codes (King & Horrocks, 2010). After all of the interviews were coded, the data was interpreted through the lens of the coding. In order to fairly assess the data, the reliability of the analysis was confirmed by providing a colleague with a random transcript, the coding categories, and the descriptions of those categories and asking her to code the transcript (King & Horrocks, 2010). A generally-accepted level of intercoder reliability is 70% (Cho, 2008); the researcher's and her colleague's coding agreed 92.8% of the time, providing an excellent level of intercoder reliability.

Description of participants and program

The FYWP at NCSU offers two different courses to help students fulfill the first-year writing course required by the university's general education program: English 100, Introduction to Academic Writing, and English 101, Academic Writing and Research. The majority of students are placed into English 101, while some must take English 100 and then English 101 (North Carolina State University Department of English, n.d.). For students whose first language is not English, the Department of Foreign Languages offers FLE 100 and FLE 101, equivalent courses which fulfill the first-year writing general education requirements. Over the fall and spring semesters of the 2014-2015 school year,

the FYWP at NCSU offered a total of three sections of ENG 100, 184 sections of ENG 101, two sections of FLE 100, and 10 sections of FLE 101. These courses were taught by a total of 59 instructors, a number which includes graduate assistants, both master's- and PhD-level, and faculty (North Carolina State University Registration & Records Class Search, n.d.).

On January 21, the undergraduate instruction and outreach librarian at NCSU's D.H. Hill Library sent a recruitment email on the researcher's behalf to recipients of the Complist listserv, which reaches faculty and graduate students in the FYWP as well as instructors of FLE 100 and 101. Six potential participants responded to this recruitment email, for a response rate of 10.1%, and interviews took place between January 27 and February 4. Of the six participants, one was a graduate student at the master's level, one was a graduate student at the PhD level, and four were faculty. Five of the participants were currently teaching ENG 101, and one had taught ENG 101 in the past but was currently teaching FLE 101. As part of the interview, participants were asked how long they had been teaching composition at any institution. Their responses revealed that the length of time participants had been teaching composition varied widely, from one to 23 years, with an overall average of 6.1 years. When the average was calculated without the outlier of 23 years, it dropped to 2.8 years.

Results

Overall impressions

Overall, the responses revealed much about the culture of the FYWP and the kinds of assignments that are common among instructors. For instance, the type of research assignments given reflected the department's common assignment, a rhetorical analysis of two sources from different disciplines. This assignment, a form of assessment, is being required for the first time this semester, but it was based on assignments that many instructors had done in the past. Most instructors required scholarly journal sources for all assignments, which reflects the program's focus on writing in the disciplines and an introduction to how scholars communicate. All participants instructed their students in source evaluation in some way, demonstrating a recognition of the topic's importance. Finally, many participants seemed very aware of the goals of the course and structured their assignments around them.

Results by Theme

Research Assignments
Table 1: *What type of research assignments do you assign in your class?*

Response	Number of responses
Analysis paper	7
Annotated bibliography	4
Research-based report	4
Argumentative paper	3
Paper based on primary research	3
Multimodal project	2

The responses to this question revealed a few trends. Though the number of analysis papers assigned was high, not all participants actually mentioned such assignments. Rather, four participants mentioned analysis papers, with three mentioning analysis papers twice. A factor that likely influenced these answers was the addition this semester of a required assignment that will be used by the FYWP as a form of assessment. One participant described the assignment as "a comparative rhetorical analysis in which they are finding different scholarly articles concerning a topic of their choice from different disciplines, and then comparing and contrasting the writing styles of people across different disciplines." Because of this requirement, it is surprising that not all participants mentioned analysis assignments. A more exact question may have yielded more consistent answers; rather than asking, "What type of research assignments do you assign in your class?", a better question might have been, "What type of research assignments did you assign in your class this semester?" Such a question would have focused the participants on a common time period.

Another trend revealed by answers to this question was participants' reliance on fairly standard research assignments, such as annotated bibliographies and research-based reports. Four participants assigned annotated bibliographies, and four assigned research-based reports. Though these are fairly common assignments, the subject matter was somewhat distinctive to the FYWP, which approaches composition with a writing in the disciplines perspective. A type of the writing across the curriculum approach, the writing in the disciplines approach familiarizes students with the "language conventions of a discipline as well as with specific formats typical of a given discipline" (Colorado State University, 2015). For many participants, this approach provided topics on which

students could write papers, as well as a framework for assignments which could build on one another. One instructor described a research-based report focused on disciplinary writing: "a disciplinary profile, where… they research the kinds of writing and research that different scholars in different academic disciplines do in order to communicate." Others described similar assignments: three assigned an argumentative paper, three assigned papers for which students conducted primary research, and two gave multimodal assignments in which students were required to create a video or other digital media assignment, often based on a previous research-based paper.

Required Sources

Table 2: *What kinds of sources do you require your students to use?*

Response	Number of responses
Scholarly journal articles	8
Popular sources	2
Books	1
Credible sources, type not specified	1

Table 3: *Are there any source types students are not allowed to use?*

Response	Number of responses
Popular sources	2
Non-scholarly sources allowed only in addition to required scholarly	2
No source types that aren't allowed	2
Commercial websites	1
Crowd-sourced websites	1

Responses to this question revealed a strong preference that students use scholarly sources in their writing, with all six participants mentioning them and two mentioning

them twice. One participant described the types of sources he required his students to use as "Mostly journal articles, overwhelmingly journal articles." Two participants required popular sources, one participant required a book, and one required credible sources but did not specify a particular type. The corollary to this reliance on scholarly sources is the prohibition against using anything but scholarly sources that two participants articulated (see Table 3). For some instructors, non-scholarly sources seem to be forbidden based not on the belief that the sources are inferior in and of themselves, but rather that the assignments can be completed only with scholarly sources. As one participant noted, "They have to use [scholarly sources], so they can't use popular sources. Magazine articles are not allowed….They can use books, but they don't usually use books." Two participants noted that students are required to use a certain number of scholarly sources but may also use non-scholarly sources as additional sources. Two participants noted that all source types are allowed, so long as students can justify their use. Additionally, one participant noted that crowd-source websites like Wikipedia were not allowed, and one steered students away from commercial websites.

Source Evaluation in the Composition Classroom

Table 4: *Do you discuss source evaluation with your students?*

Response	Number of responses
Yes	6

Table 5: *How do you discuss it with your students?*

Response	Number of responses
In-class discussion	6
In-class activity	3
Watching online video on evaluation	1
Online tutorial	1
Out-of-class assignment	1
One-on-one conferences	1

Table 6: *Why do you teach students to evaluate sources?*

Response	Number of responses
Students' lack of knowledge	2
Related to other issues in composition	2
Own experience of research difficulty	1
To prepare students for future	1
Important to evaluate sources in other contexts	1

Table 7: *Do you give your students a definition of credible sources?*

Response	Number of responses
Yes	5
No	1

Table 8: *Further detail on what kind of definition is given or how it is given*

Response	Number of responses
Library-produced content	2
Instructor-produced content	1
Heuristic	1
Through examples of credible sources	1
Through assignments	1

Table 9: *Further detail on definition not given*

Response	Number of responses
Through examples of unreliable sources	1

All participants taught their students about source evaluation, and all but one gave

their students some sort of a definition of credible sources. This instruction came

primarily in the form of in-class discussion, as all participants responded. One participant

described an iterative process as a combination of instructor-led discussion and student

activity:

> "I probably have at least two separate days where I deal with it explicitly, as part
> of my lesson plan…And so early in the semester I'll touch on it. For example, this
> semester I introduced it by kind of discussing, in really broad brush strokes,
> epistemology. What is knowledge making in the disciplines? ...Then later in the
> semester, using resources available from the library, usually, I'll go into more
> depth about the distinction between a scholarly article, a trade journal, a popular
> magazine, and have students practice identifying different ones, and identify
> which clues they would look for even if sometimes they have to go outside of a
> text to look up the context."

Two instructors noted using the NCSU libraries' resources as part of their instruction on

evaluating sources, either by having students watch a video created by the NCSU

libraries or by having students refer to an online tutorial. These resources were

particularly helpful for participants whose classes were hybrid classes, meeting in person

only once a week and the rest of the time online. As one participant noted, "I have probably fewer in class discussions of things, so it's more likely that they…would be doing a writing reflection and response to readings and videos that they've seen, rather than necessarily having conversations about that in class." Finally, three of the participants described activities in which students evaluated sample sources based on criteria that had been discussed in class or through a library resource.

Participants noted a variety of reasons for teaching students to evaluate sources. Two articulated a belief that students are generally unaware of the difference between reliable and unreliable sources, citing past experiences that supported their beliefs. As one participant recalled,

> "once you get your first batch of research papers, and you're looking at their works cited page, and you're looking at how they're using sources, you realize that [your] students, most of them – some of them do fine – but most of them have no idea what they're doing with research and with sources. Understandably, they don't have a lot of experience with it."

Another participant attributed their difficulty to a glut of available information: "because everything is so easily accessible…some of them have never really been taught to think about that more deeply." One participant noted that evaluating sources is relevant in other contexts, either in future classes students will take or in real-world contexts, and one cited a personal difficult experience with research that prompted the inclusion of those skills in the classroom.

Unsurprisingly, five participants gave their students some sort of definition of credible sources, though the way they conveyed that definition varied widely. Two relied on the library's resources to convey a definition to students, while one used his or her own content and one showed examples of credible sources. One created a heuristic for

students, and one let the students' understanding develop through various assignments. The participant who did not give a definition of credible sources instead relied on examples of unreliable sources to encourage students to question the sources they find, noting that "[a credible source is] something that when you see it you know what it is."

It is worth noting that the responses to this question may have been biased somewhat through the use of a convenience sample that relied on volunteers. Participants knew the subject of the research before volunteering, and those who already taught students to evaluate sources may have been the ones most likely to volunteer for the study. However, with the FYWP's heavy emphasis on scholarly sources, it is likely that most instructors do discuss the difference between popular and scholarly sources with their students, and making such a distinction is a form of evaluation. Additionally, the language of the researcher's question may have skewed the results heavily towards discussion as a way of teaching students. Asking "Do you *discuss* source evaluation with your students?" may have encouraged participants to list discussion as the means of instruction. A better question would likely have been, "Do you *teach* your students about source evaluation?"

The Intersection of Composition and Source Evaluation

Table 10: *When students leave your class, what kind of source evaluation skills would you like them to have?*

Response	Number of responses
Ability to distinguish between reliable and unreliable sources	4
Ability to find reliable sources	3
Understanding of context of scholarly writing	3
General knowledge of library resources	1
Ability to use a scholarly article in own writing	1

Table 11: *How does evaluating sources relate to composition as a whole?*

Response	Number of responses
Importance of using others' research in own writing	3
Shared focus on critical thinking	2
Importance of understanding rhetorical context	1
Both foundational skills	1

While four participants said that they wanted their students to be able to tell the difference between reliable and unreliable sources, a skill that is the very essence of source evaluation, other responses to these two questions revealed an interesting trend: participants often equated source evaluation with related library or composition skills. For instance, three participants wanted students to be able to find reliable sources, a library skill. As one participant observed about students' searching process, finding sources "can be really, really hard, and they can give up really easily. So if they type in

one keyword and they get no hits, then they want to switch topics. Or if they get too many hits, then they want to switch topics." Another participant wanted to see students generally understand how to use the library. Three participants also wanted students to understand the broader context of scholarly communication, to develop, as one participant noted, "a sensitivity to the variety of sources and contexts." Finally, one participant noted that students should know how to use sources in their own writing. Participants obviously saw a strong connection between source evaluation as a skill and other skills related to finding or using sources, to the extent that when asked about source evaluation, their responses referred to related skills that in many ways provide a foundation for source evaluation or reflect how reliable sources are used.

Participants' observations about the link between evaluating sources and composition as a whole reflected their connection between evaluating sources and related library skills. Half of the participants cited the connection between evaluating sources and using sources in one's own writing, with one participant observing, "I think research skills become important in any kind of writing, being able to gather information and learn how to shape and artfully use that information." Similarly, one participant wanted students to understand the rhetorical context of all types of writing in order to be better writers. Other participants noted the connection between the critical thinking skills needed to evaluate sources and those taught in composition courses. As one participant observed, "part of being able to write well is to be able to think critically about other people's writing." Somewhat surprisingly, only one participant said that evaluating sources and composition are both foundational skills for success in college and beyond.

Library Instruction

Table 12: *Did you sign up for library instruction this semester?*

Response	Number of responses
Yes	4
No	2

Table 13: *If yes – what modules did you choose?*

Response	Number of responses
Searching Summon for articles	3
Navigating subject-specific databases	3
Understanding scholarly sources	3
Scavenger hunt	2
Evaluating sources	2
Time for directed or solo research practice	1

Table 14: *If yes – why did you choose these modules?*

Responses	Number of responses
To familiarize students with library	3
To support particular assignment	2
Librarian instruction reinforces concepts	2
Personal importance of topics chosen	1
A chance to practice concepts	1
Prepare students for rest of course	1

Table 15: *If no – why not?*

Response	Number of responses
Library's online resources work best for class	1
Previous instruction didn't fulfill needs	1
Lack of time	1

When instructors in the FYWP at NCSU sign up for library instruction, they have a wide range of instruction options. Library instruction is offered through a variety of modules, and instructors can choose up to three modules for their class. These modules range from skills-based instruction, such as searching in databases or in the catalog, to more concept-based instruction, such as evaluating resources and choosing a research topic. Instructors can request time for students to conduct research under the guidance of a librarian, and they can also choose a mobile scavenger hunt to familiarize their students with the library and its resources. Some English 101 classes meet for 50 minutes four times a week, while others meet for 100 minutes two times a week (North Carolina State University Libraries, 2015).

A majority of participants (four out of six) had signed up for library instruction this semester, choosing a wide variety of instructional modules. Three had selected "Searching Summon for Articles" and "Navigating Subject-Specific Databases," both of which are focused on the skill of database searching. While only two selected the module "Evaluating Sources," which covers some basic criteria on which to evaluate sources, three chose "Understanding Scholarly Sources," which covers the difference between scholarly and popular sources. Based on the value participants placed on students' understanding of what constitutes a scholarly source, it seems likely that for many

instructors, the scholarly sources module is another way to teach students how to evaluate

sources. Finally, two participants had chosen a scavenger hunt, and one, in addition to

two other modules, requested time for students to conduct research.

Goals for requesting library instruction varied. Three participants reported a goal

of familiarizing students with the library, two chose modules to support a particular

assignment, and two cited the importance of a librarian reinforcing concepts already

taught by the course instructor. As one participant noted, "I think it's really important that

they…get to know about the library from someone who is not me, from someone else's

perspective." In addition, one participant noted that he or she personally viewed the

chosen modules as important, while another felt that library instruction at the beginning

of the semester prepared students for the rest of the course. In addition, one participant

noted that the chosen modules provided students a chance to practice the concepts

learned. The two instructors who did not sign up for instruction had clear reasons for not

doing so. One instructor noted that using the library's online resources, including videos

and tutorials, worked better for the class, saying, "[The online materials are] so good, that

works for me." Another participant cited both a previous experience with library

instruction and a lack of time:

> "I did last semester…and I felt like I wanted it to be more research-intensive
> focused, and I guess I could have signed up for something that did that, but what I
> did was the general scavenger hunt, and I feel like that really distracted them, and
> I'm not sure that they really got the point of it, which might be a failing for me
> setting it up, rather than the library instructor's failings. And then this semester, I
> just didn't have the time in my schedule to set it up."

Such a lack of time is likely not uncommon among instructors in the rest of the FYWP.

Who Should Teach Source Evaluation?

Table 16: *Who should teach composition students how to evaluate sources – composition instructors, librarians, or a combination of both?*

Response	Number of responses
Collaborative effort	4
Composition instructors	2

Table 17: *Collaborative - why?*

Response	Number of responses
Librarians are the experts on evaluation	3
Course instructors and librarians have complementary roles	2
Important to hear about it from someone other than course instructor	2
Composition instructors can teach concept using library resources	1

Table 18: *Composition instructors – why?*

Response	Number of responses
Part of course instructors' job	2
Course instructors have more influence than librarians on students' learning	1

Responses to this question were an interesting mixture of those who viewed instruction in source evaluation as the domain of the course instructor and those who viewed it as a collaborative effort. The majority (four out of six) believed in collaboration between a librarian and the composition instructor, while two thought that the

composition instructor should teach this skill. Those who advocated collaboration cited a variety of reasons for this approach. Three viewed librarians as the experts in source evaluation; as one participant said, "the knowledge base of librarians is more expansive, inherently, than an English, or rhetoric, or composition instructor's." Two saw the librarian and composition instructor as having complementary roles; one instructor said, "I see my role as…preparing them for the library sessions, because I've found that if the students haven't gotten some real preparation, then those tutorials tend to be sort of worthless, because they're not ready to hear them." One participant cited a different form of collaboration in that the composition instructor can use library-created resources to teach source evaluation. The two participants who viewed instruction in source evaluation as the domain of the composition instructor did not disparage the role of the librarian; rather, they viewed it as the responsibility of the composition instructor for practical reasons. As one participant observed, "I think that we're sort of the front line for talking to students about that. That is our job, that's part of our job, and I just think of the library as being supplemental." Similarly, one participant viewed composition instructors as more likely to have an influence on students' learning than librarians would.

Discussion

Assignments and Source Types

One theme that emerges is the extent to which the assignments instructors give are influenced by the goals of the course and the culture of the department in which they teach. Participants generally seemed to give assignments that were designed to fulfill the goals of the course (see Tables 2 and 3). The official course descriptions for English 101 and FLE 101, as published in the NCSU course catalog, read in part:

> Intensive instruction in academic writing and research. Basic principles of rhetoric and strategies for academic inquiry and argument. Instruction and practice in critical reading, including the generative and responsible use of print and electronic sources for academic research. Exploration of literate practices across a range of academic domains, laying the foundation for further writing development in college. (North Carolina State University Registration & Records Class Search, n.d.)

This focus on academic writing is reflected in the participants' emphasis on scholarly journal articles as sources for students' assignments. While such an emphasis on scholarly sources is logical considering the goals of the course, focusing on only scholarly journal articles may leave students with the false impression that non-scholarly sources are never appropriate in academic writing, whether or not such a belief is explicitly stated by instructors. While the open Internet is certainly peppered with spurious information, scholarly journal articles are not exempt from untruths and poor research. Equating scholarly sources with reliable sources may be just as problematic as equating Internet sources with unreliable sources.

Evaluating Sources

The participants' answers to questions related to how they teach their students to evaluate sources reveal the importance that instructors place on the need to evaluate sources. Though it is certainly possible that the convenience sample resulted in the recruitment of participants who already believed in the importance of evaluating sources, the participants in this study articulated a belief in the value of teaching students this skill, whether that was through collaboration with a librarian through an instruction session or through the instructor's own teaching in the classroom. Indeed, the tendency of many participants to equate evaluating sources with other library skills, such as finding sources in general, seems to underscore the value that participants placed on evaluating sources to the point that it is an issue inseparable from finding information in general.

The skills that many participants desired their students to have were both foundational and higher-level skills: the ability to judge a source's credibility, the ability to find such sources, and the knowledge of the larger context of scholarly sources. These skills are important for students to develop in their composition class, but students will also continue to develop them as they progress in their fields of study and learn the finer points of conducting research in their chosen discipline. Additionally, these desired skills are all ones that the academic library is in an excellent position to help students develop. Looking back to the first research question, "When it comes to teaching first-year composition students how to evaluate sources, what content do composition faculty want to be included?", it is clear that composition faculty desire instruction and resources that will help students become comfortable with basics of both searching for sources and distinguishing the reliable from the unreliable.

The Role of the Library

A look at participants' responses across all questions posed by the researcher reveals a general level of appreciation for the role the library can play in helping students develop their source evaluation skills. Even participants who felt that it was composition instructors' responsibility to teach students source evaluation noted using resources created by the library; no participant articulated a preference for teaching such skills entirely on his or her own. Rather, participants tended to be cognizant of their own limitations in teaching students how to conduct research, deferring to a librarian or to library resources when necessary and recognizing when they were best suited to teaching certain skills, such as teaching students how to incorporate scholarly sources into their writing. For academic librarians, this trend is promising: instructors do value what the library can contribute to their students' learning, but they need a variety of options, including both in-person instruction and online resources.

Participants' responses also reveal the need for instruction librarians to be familiar with the needs of the faculty and students whom they serve. While there are some general characteristics of first-year composition that may be assumed to be fairly consistent across colleges and universities, each FYWP will have its own approach to teaching composition which will affect the type of library instruction they require. If the goals of a library instruction program do not match those of the FYWP, both faculty and students are likely to be dissatisfied. A good relationship between the FYWP and the library instruction program in which faculty feel like their needs are being understood and met will likely result in more effective instruction. Similarly, as information experts, librarians can serve a consultative role in helping faculty develop effective research

assignments within the goals of the composition program. In light of the second research question posed at the beginning of this study regarding who should teach students to evaluate sources, it seems clear that instructors do want the library to be involved in some way, whether that is through collaborative instruction or through the availability of library-created resources. Thus, academic libraries should offer a variety of resources, including both instruction options and web-based tools, to meet the needs of a wide variety of composition faculty.

Conclusion

Though it is impossible to generalize the results of this study to all composition instructors and even to all academic library instruction programs because of the small sample size and limited scope, the results do draw attention to some important issues with implications both for library instruction and for the relationship between composition programs and the academic library. One is the need for instruction librarians to take the time to learn about the programs they serve, including both the curriculum and the way that individual instructors approach the curriculum. In the case of the FYWP at NCSU, the writing in the disciplines approach taken by the program has a strong influence on the type of assignments instructors give, the types of sources they require their students to use, and the kinds of support they need from the library. Furthermore, because programs are dynamic and prone to change, it is important that instruction librarians stay up to date on changes to the department's curriculum so that the library's resources stay relevant to student and faculty needs.

Another important implication is that composition instructors do value the role that librarians can play in teaching their students to evaluate sources. This role can take a variety of shapes, from applying the librarian's expert knowledge to show students how to find reliable sources; to reinforcing what has already been discussed in the classroom; to creating relevant videos, tutorials, and guides that instructors can use in addition to or in place of in-person library instruction. In addition, further research into the attitudes and needs of composition faculty would help to broaden instruction librarians' knowledge of

this population, which is particularly important in light of the close relationship between library instruction and composition programs. While evaluating sources is only one part of effective information use, it is a very important part of being information literate, so further research into the attitudes of both composition faculty and instruction librarians would do much to improve instruction in this particular skill as well as the relationships between library instruction and composition programs.

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Appendix A - Basic Interview Questions

1. Are you a graduate student or are you faculty?

2. How long have you been teaching composition?

3. What kind of research assignments do you assign in your class?

4. What kind of sources do you require your students to use? Are there any source types that are not allowed? Why?

5. Do you discuss source evaluation with your students? If so, how do you teach it? Why do you teach it?

6. Do you give your students a definition of credible sources? If so, what is it?

7. What kind of source evaluation skills would you like your students to have when they leave your class?

8. How does evaluating sources relate to composition as a whole?

9. Did you sign up for library instruction this semester? If so, what kind of instruction modules? Why? If not, why?

10. Who should teach students how to evaluate sources – composition instructors or librarians? Why?

Appendix B – Informed Consent

As a graduate student at UNC-CH's School of Information and Library Science, I am conducting research for my master's paper. Your participation in this research will help me learn more about composition faculty attitudes towards teaching students how to evaluate sources. During this study, you will be asked questions about your teaching and your attitudes towards teaching source evaluation. If there are any questions you do not wish to answer, you are not required to do so, and we can either stop the interview or move on to another question. This interview is designed to last approximately 30 minutes.

I will be recording our conversation, and the audio files will be kept in a password-protected file until they are transcribed. No identifying information will be attached to the audio file or to the transcript. Once I have transcribed the interview, the audio file will be deleted, and the transcription will be kept in a password-protected file. I do not foresee any risks to you due to your participation in this study.

Informed Consent

I understand the purpose of the study and agree to participate. I understand that my participation in this study is voluntary and that I can withdraw at any time.

If I have any questions about this study, I am free to contact the principal investigator, Lisa Becksford ([redacted]) or the faculty adviser (Claudia Gollop, [redacted]).

By signing below, I consent to participate and to have my interview recorded.

_____
Printed name

_____
Signature

_____
Date

Appendix C – Recruitment Email

Dear instructors,

My name is Lisa Becksford, and I am a graduate assistant in the Research and Information Services department at D.H. Hill and a graduate student at UNC's School of Information and Library Science. I am writing to invite you to participate in interviews I am conducting as part of my master's paper to determine the attitudes of composition faculty towards teaching students how to evaluate sources. These interviews will last no more than 30 minutes and can be scheduled at a time and location on campus convenient to you. In addition to providing data for my master's paper, these interviews will provide information that will help our library instruction team know what is important to you. All faculty and graduate students who have taught or are teaching at least one section of ENG 101 either in the fall or in the spring are eligible to participate. Your participation is completely voluntary, and no identifying information will be collected in the interview process. All interview data will remain confidential. If you would like to participate in the study or have any questions about it, please contact me at [redacted]. This project has been approved by the UNC Office of Human Research Ethics.

Thank you for your time,

Lisa Becksford

Graduate Assistant, Research and Information Services

D.H. Hill Library