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Exploring Developmental Disabilities Using Fiction, Journal Articles, Film, and Real Life

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GNED 1300- First Year Seminar
Topic: Exploring Developmental Disabilities (Using Fiction,
Journal Articles, Film and "Real Life")

Fall 2011, T/Th 11:20-12:35, CLS 421

Dr. Jane Childers

The syllabus for this course states, "This seminar will explore several major developmental disabilities including autism, Down's syndrome, ADHD and being deaf. We will start with fictional (e.g., "Sarah Canary"), and nonfictional books (e.g., "Thinking in Pictures") to begin our explorations of each disability, and then will use library research to inform us about each disability (journal articles from multiple academic databases as well as other sources)."

The new QEP assignment in this new course will be at work at many points during the semester. All of the assigned readings are first person or second/third person accounts of a single individual with a particular disorder, living in a particular context at a specific time in history. We will use these books as a "jumping off point" for library research into the disorder as a whole (and the history of treating disorders throughout the 1900s to today). Of course the course will not culminate into a complete understanding of a disorder as it is a seminar for first year students, but students' own research will lead them to a greater understanding of particular disorders. To do this, our library liason, Alex Gallin-Parisi, will visit on Day 2 of the class and will present an overview about how to search for scholarly sources. This initiation into library research (described more fully below), early in the semester, and the many class days in which students will have a chance to practice these skills for different disorders, fits well with the QEP goals of UNDERSTAND and ACCESS.

Two additional activities will add to students' ability to UNDERSTAND differences between different types of sources. One will be an ongoing class discussion of the sources that have been found on multiple days during the course (see syllabus), and the ways different types of sources differ from each other. A second assignment will be one I have used in a previous FYS ("Do animals think?"), in which students will write a paper that will compare different types of sources (see Short Paper due on 11/15). The course also includes components in the library session to meet the UNDERSTAND and ACCESS QEP goals (detailed below) and includes discussion of plagiarism and copywrite issues in the classroom (for USE ETHICALLY). The following describes assignments more fully and uses text from the syllabus to describe how the course now meets these 3 QEP goals; it also includes ideas for assessment.

QEP Goal:

"Access information efficiently and effectively (ACCESS). Students will understand and apply techniques for accessing information which may include general searching principles, accessing appropriate Web-based resources, becoming familiar with specialized collections, and using Interlibrary Loan." (QEP website)

Three assignments fit this goal.

1) on Tu, 8/30, Library Liaison Alexandra Gallin-Parisi will visit the class and introduce students to searching. Students will then practice searching and bring in their own sources on several class days (e.g., on 9/01, 9/06, 9/15 and others, see syllabus).

2) From the syllabus:

"On Thursday, Nov. 10th, we will go to the library as a class, meet with a librarian and discuss how to conduct library research using databases available at Trinity. You should come to this session with a topic related to the course that you can work on during this session. (We will discuss individual topic ideas on the day before this session, 11/8, during class.) During this library session, we will complete multiple searches using at least 2 different databases (e.g., PsycInfo for psychology sources; other databases for sources related to medicine, education, etc.), and briefly discuss the differences between the results we find. We will also conduct searches using the internet (including Wikipedia) and compare these search results to what we found using academic databases. Before we leave the library, we will explore interlibrary loan (ILL) at the library and discuss how to use it."

3) From the syllabus:

"Using an annotated bibliography. You also will turn in a short description of your topic and an annotated bibliography, providing a short description of 8-10 sources you have found (due on 11/17). You will use this bibliography to choose the *best* 5-7 new sources that you will use in your paper. The annotated bibliography will be worth 5% of your final grade."

Assessment of ACCESS:

The annotated bibliography (due on 11/17) will serve as written documentation that students are able to access information efficiently and effectively. This assignment will demonstrate their ability to do this for a specific topic of their own choosing.

QEP Goal:

"Understand the varieties of information sources available (UNDERSTAND). Students will demonstrate an understanding of the nature of information sources, such as books, journals, newspapers, Websites, and media, and an understanding of how they vary in audience orientation and authority." (QEP website)

1) On days in which students bring their own sources to class, we will discuss different types of sources and compare the information gathered from different sources.

2) From syllabus:

"One class day after the library session, you will turn in a short description of your topic, and a short paper (2 pages). You will read 1-2 of the academic sources you found, and 1-2 internet sources, and write a short paper comparing the information found from these sources to each other (**Short Paper; due on 11/15**). In this paper, you should consider how each source is written for a

particular audience (for example, What are most of the readers of this source like? How do characteristics of the audience affect the kinds of information that appears in the source?) and the authority of the source (Who are the authors? Has anyone reviewed this work before it is published?). **This paper will be worth 5% of your final grade.**

Assessment

- 1) I will keep a list of sources students bring to class on the first day they are asked to bring in their own sources and on the last day. I expect sources to be from more academic databases, and to be more focused and relevant later in semester than they are earlier in the semester.
- 2) This short paper will demonstrate that students will be able compare different types of sources to each other and consider how audience and authority affect the content of sources.

QEP Goal:

"Understand the concept of intellectual property and the economic, legal, and social contexts of information, and use information ethically (USE ETHICALLY). Students will understand the concepts of plagiarism and copyright and will appropriately use citation/documentation systems in their work. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the University Academic Honor Code." (QEP website)

From syllabus:

"Early in the semester, we will discuss plagiarism, which is the use of any other person's words or ideas without credit, and copyright issues, which has economic and legal consequences. We will also discuss how to cite sources using APA style in written papers, and later in the semester we will discuss citing sources in PowerPoint presentations. You should examine your own understanding of plagiarism and ask questions. It is your responsibility to understand what plagiarism is and to avoid it. You are encouraged to refer to a set of links provided by our library to be sure you understand how plagiarism occurs and for help with citations and references (see <http://libguides.trinity.edu/psychology>).

Under the new Honor Code, you are required to record the following pledge on all graded, written work: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this work", or simply abbreviate this statement with the word "pledged". Your statement should be followed by your signature. Any violations of the honor code will be reported to the Trinity Honor Council."

Assessment:

I will use classroom examples to explain the difference between a direct quote, a paraphrase and writing in one's own words. I will also spend some time explaining citations and references using APA style.

Students' ability to use citations and their acknowledgment of the Honor Code will be evident in all of their papers, which will include citations and references and will be pledged.

Learning technologies/ information resources:

The course includes searching in academic databases, using the internet, creating a PowerPoint presentation and off-campus experiences. As students search for information on multiple class days to add to discussion, I will guide their evaluations of internet searching and sources.