University
Libraries

University of Richmond
UR Scholarship Repository

University Libraries Faculty and Staff Publications

University Libraries

1992

A Model for College Library Visits

Lucretia McCulley
University of Richmond, lmcculle@richmond.edu

Christine Campbell

Follow this and additional works at: http://scholarship.richmond.edu/university-libraries-publications

Part of the Information Literacy Commons

Recommended Citation

A Model for College Library Visits

**By Christine Campbell &
Lucretia McCulley**

*Classroom teachers and the
librarians from both the
high school and the college
worked together to make a
research project especially
beneficial to the students.*

In the last decade, many college and
university libraries have begun
offering formal instruction programs
to high school students who can
benefit from college-level resources.
The benefits of such programs are
numerous: an opportunity for high
school students to "bridge the gap"
between the use of high school
libraries and college libraries;
recruitment opportunities for the
college; and the opportunity for
high school and college librarians to
work closely together.

To make such programs success-
ful, it is extremely important that
the university librarian and the high
school librarian work in close
collaboration—in their communica-
tions as well as in planning course
contents. In an article in the fall
1987 issue of *Research Quarterly,*
Kathleen Carver noted that the
literature "lacks articles describing
bibliographic instruction programs
cotaught by academic and school
librarians." We will describe here a
successful team-teaching experience
with an honors English class using a
medium-size university library.

Boatwright Memorial Library at
the University of Richmond serves
an undergraduate population of
2,700 students. Another 2,000
students are enrolled in graduate

programs and evening school. The
reference department has a well-
established library skills programs
for college students. Instruction
sessions are also offered to campus
staff and faculty.

Boatwright Library has long been
a favorite resource for high schools
in the area. In the last three years, it
has offered a total of 20 tours and
instruction sessions to advanced
placement and honors students from
the area's public schools. For the
most part, these have been fairly
successful in terms of student
interest. However, instructional
goals for the sessions have been
lacking, or vague at best.

Last winter, a larger than usual
honors class was scheduled to visit
the university library—two sections
of an eleventh-grade English class
with 25 students in each. The
classroom teacher had a well-
developed assignment. From a list of
20th-century American authors,
students chose to read one novel.
(Since the students would have
access to the university's resources,
they were encouraged to select
lesser-known authors.) At their own
school the only print index available
was *Readers' Guide.* After reading a
minimum of 150 pages of literary
criticism about the author, the
students prepared a precis summa-
rizing the various critical aspects of
the work. From the topic explored
in the precis, the teacher recom-
mended one narrow aspect that
could be successfully researched
and presented in a short paper
(3-5 pages).

In preparation for the university
visit, the two librarians agreed they
would offer a tour and instruction

session led by the university
librarian, a demonstration of the
online catalog, and time for students
to explore the resources.

Prior to the visit, the high school
librarian distributed a packet of
information to every student. Since
the students would be introduced to
the *Humanities Index* and *Essay
and General Literature Index,* the
librarian included a photocopied
page from both in the packets.
Students were shown how to
determine if a specific journal listed
in the *Periodicals Holdings List*
was indeed held by the university
libraries. The packet also contained
a brief outline of the Library of
Congress classification system. A
floor plan of the Boatwright Library
was also included, with areas to be
visited highlighted.

Since the students would be
required to photocopy an article or
chapter pertaining to their topic,
copy cards issued by the university
were secured in advance and sold to
pairs of students. Finally, the student
heard tips from their librarian on
how "not to look like a high school
student" while visiting the university.

At the university, instruction in
the online catalog was limited to
what students needed to know to
find materials about their author and
his writings. This approach was a
key point in not overwhelming the
students. The last part of the
instruction session repeated the use
of the *Humanities Index* and *Essay
and General Literature Index,* as
well as the library's *Periodicals
Holdings List.* Students were then
given an hour to find the materials.

From the experience we have
drawn up a model of collaboration

that we feel will ensure successful college visits:

1. *Schedule.* Begin planning at least two months before the scheduled trip.

2. *Assignment.* Encourage the classroom teacher to develop a specific, focused assignment, preferably one that students have researched in their high school and public libraries prior to their university library visit.

3. *Site Visit.* Visit the university library and review plans and strategies with the university librarian. (Both the classroom teacher and the school librarian should make this visit.)

3. *Team-Teaching Opportunities.* Include opportunities to demonstrate team-teaching by the teacher and the librarians such as pre-visit instruction and support during the instruction phase.

4. *Pre-visit Instruction.* Plan a library instruction session at the high school library, reviewing sources at the university, goals and objectives for the assignment, policies of the university library, and tips on behavior.

5. *Follow-up Research Time.* Allow at least an hour for students to identify and locate materials useful to their assignment. Librarians and teachers should be available for follow-up questions during this period.

6. *Limited Focus.* Focus on what is relevant and can be grasped and put to use by students immediately. Not everything can be taught about a university library in one visit.

Christine Campbell is the School Librarian at J.R. Tucker High School in Henrico County, Virginia. Lucretia McCulley is the Director of Public Services for the Boatwright Memorial Library of the University of Richmond.