Sample Lesson Plan

NOTE: This is a lesson plan for a 75-minute library instruction session. Your own lesson plan may be for a similar length class, or for a shorter or longer session. However, for your presentation, you should select a 15-minute portion of your lesson to demonstrate to the T-3 workshop participants. In this lesson, for example, Part II would take approximately 15 minutes. -- Emily Werrell

CLASS: Biology seminar 49S – Library Instruction Session

SUBJECT OF THE LESSON
Identifying types of articles in scientific journals and news publications (news, review, research, opinion); using indexes effectively to find such articles; evaluating web sites; identifying a possible use for each type of source in the context of academic research and writing

AUDIENCE
Biology majors – 1st and 2nd year undergraduate

LEARNING OBJECTIVES (note: this lesson addresses ACRL Standards 1, 2 and 3. Of the SAILS Skill Sets, it addresses Sets 2-7, 9, and 10.)

• Students will identify articles by type (research article, opinion, news, etc.)
• Students will select appropriate indexes for both news and biology-related articles
• Students will search a news index effectively to find articles about scientific topics
• Students will search a science index effectively to find news, research, or review articles in scholarly journals
• Students will critically evaluate science-related commercial web sites

CONTENT OUTLINE
I. Introduction
II. Identifying types of articles for research in Biology
   A. News articles: selecting indexes; searching Lexis-Nexis
   B. “Primary” articles in the sciences: selecting indexes; searching Medline
III. How to find various types of articles
   A. News articles: selecting indexes; searching Lexis-Nexis
   B. “Primary” articles in the sciences: selecting indexes; searching Medline
IV. Evaluating Resources on the Web
V. How to get help in the library

METHODS
Part I
• “Question Shuffle” activity*
• Brief lecture
Part II
• Student exercise: in small groups, examine issues of Science and Nature. Small group reports: using handout as a guide (Research Sources in the Sciences matrix), describe types of articles found in these journals (news articles, primary research articles, editorials, review articles).
• Class discussion: How these journals differ from other types of publications like news magazines and web sites. Note differences in authorship and editorial control. Where do journalists get their information?
Part III
• Individual work: Using library web site, students identify an appropriate index for news articles using the library’s web page and report to class.
• Guided student searching in Lexis-Nexis: what’s the latest news on cloning? Discuss results briefly
• Brief lecture: Instructor demo of Lexis-Nexis advanced searching
  o news categories
  o field searching and limits
  o Boolean and truncation (Handout: Power Keyword Searching)
• Guided searching: Students find article on the first cloned horse
• Question & Answer: students explain how this article can lead to information about the original study.
• Individual work: Using library web site, students identify appropriate indexes for research in scholarly Biology journals
• Brief lecture: Instructor demo of Medline - field searching and limits
• Student activity: working in pairs; find either a primary article or a review article on cloning. Discuss value of comprehensive scholarly reviews for undergraduate research.

Part IV
• Think-pair-share: evaluate the web site for Dream Technologies International or Lazaron Biotechnologies. (Handout: "Evaluating Web Resources")

Part V
• Brief lecture – where to get help
• Question & Answer: finish "question shuffle"
• Wrap-up; students complete evaluation form

*Question Shuffle
You need a couple of minutes at the beginning of class and about 10 minutes at the end to do this activity.

Pass out piece of scrap paper to each student at the beginning of class. Ask them to write down one question they have about using the library. Assure them that it will be anonymous and that even what they think are dumb questions are OK.

When they're done writing (should only take a minute or two), have them pass the questions forward to you. Shuffle them, and immediately pass them back. If they accidentally get their own question back, it won't matter.

Explain to them that if the question on their slip of paper has not been answered by the time class is over, they will have to ask it. Then proceed with your instruction session.

At the end of class, say, "OK, which questions are left that I didn't answer?" And proceed to answer as many as possible.

This activity frees students from some of the embarrassment of asking questions, since the one they're asking isn't "theirs." Frequently classmates will answer a question for you, if you did cover it and the asker wasn't listening! Students will write down some very basic questions that they would NEVER ask out loud.