Abstract:
This ILCEP collaboration focused on making a variety of types of information literacy support and instruction available to students in Political Science 352 / 691C to improve their ability to locate and evaluate information related to a specific country which they were assigned for a simulation activity and paper. Instead of using Wikipedia, students were encouraged to use Summon, WVU Libraries’ metasearch tool. Students participated in three in-class instruction sessions and had the option to attend two evening drop-in sessions. A course-specific LibGuide was created with sections to assist students with understanding the content and organization of the library’s resources, locating and obtaining resources beyond WVU’s collection, evaluating the quality of sources, citing references using RefWorks, and avoiding plagiarism. A graded information literacy exercise was required; the professor selected a citation from the EU simulation paper and students were asked to complete the CRAAP test for that reference. Students were also given a pre-test to assess prior knowledge and a graded post-test to measure improvement.

Objectives:
After completion of the course, students will demonstrate the ability to: (1) search the web using new techniques learned in class; (2) successfully locate authoritative and relevant sites and scholarship; (3) apply critical thinking to the choices made for citations; (4) use information legally and (5) ethically by applying a correct bibliographic style.

Instruction and Evaluation:
Pre-test and graded Post-Test
3 classroom instruction sessions
2 evening drop-in sessions
Graded CRAAP test assignment
(integrated with EU simulation paper)
Course-specific LibGuide

Comparison of Student Performance on Pre / Post Tests
11 / 18 students showed improvement (61%)

West Virginia University
Department of Political Science, Eberly College of Arts & Sciences
POLS 352 / 691C Politics of the European Union
Dr. Donley T. Studlar,
Eberly Family Distinguished Professor of Political Science,
collaborating with William Rafter and Jill Rafter,
Associate University Librarians

Feedback from Students
“I learned how to better find good, quality citations, which was very convenient”
“ref works was a huge help for me, I attended a drop in session where it was taught to me”
“At first I thought it was going to be boring and I knew how to do everything, but it was very helpful and interesting! Thanks!”
“I think the libguides are great and could be helpful in many other political science and history courses”

Results from Student Evaluations

Student research for this course centered around a European Union simulation activity and related term paper.

“While the overall term paper scores were not higher for this semester, compared to previous ones, the reference sections were improved in two ways. First, there was better focus on more appropriate references for the assigned topic. Second, there were fewer citation errors. In fact, every student turned in a correct citation form, which is a first in my 20 years at WVU. I attribute this to the more intensive literacy information sessions.” — Donley Studlar