Finding & Evaluating Sources

In this session, students are asked to locate resources on Google and in a Library database, then compare their search results and assess the scholarly value and appropriateness of the resources they’ve found.

Research Topic: You have an assignment to write a five page paper about the psychological effects of social media participation. You have decided to focus your research on Twitter.

Introduction (5 minutes)
- Where would you normally begin?
- Librarian introduces the course and the sample research topic
- Librarian asks students where they normally start their research, and has them navigate to that page on their individual tablets

Initial searching (10 minutes)
- Begin as if you were engaging in your normal research process, using your individual tablets
- As a group, come together and discuss your findings:
  - Did everyone use the same site?
  - What keywords did your group members use?
  - Which keywords and sites were more/less effective?
- Make notes about what you found on your team whiteboard.
- As a group, select an article or website you’d consider using in your assignment, and keep that page active on one of your group member’s tablets.
- Discuss the resource you selected:
  - Who produced the website or article?
  - What are the authors’ qualifications?
  - What type of citations and bibliography does the result provide?
  - What made you pick this particular resource?

Class Discussion (20 minutes)
- Each group will present its selected article and highlight why they feel it is a useful, scholarly resource. As each group discusses its article, the Librarian will display that article on all classroom screens.
- The librarian will share additional comments, search tactics, and characteristics of scholarly materials to look for when evaluating resources.

Peer-reviewed research (5 minutes)
- The librarian will introduce or reinforce the concept of peer-reviewed, scholarly research, and the advantages of Google Scholar and Library databases, linking the discussion to the resources students located.

Debrief (5 minutes)
- What would your next steps be if you continued to work on this assignment?
- Any questions?

Closing
- Ask all students to take our brief classroom survey