

# Energise>>Enthuse>>Inspire

## Add one new grad, international students, information literacy, and stir

In my final year of studying for my BA at Macquarie University I went to the library with a difficult reference question about Kubrick's film *A Clockwork Orange*. The librarian who helped me went out of his way to find the answer to this question and connected me to a plethora of useful sources that helped me to get a great mark for my assignment. I decided that I wanted to become a librarian like this man, a person who would go the extra mile to connect students with the information that they need.

After working in both academic and government libraries, I saw the job ad for the librarian position at the Wollongong University Sydney Business School (SBS) and I leaped at the opportunity. I was particularly interested in the reference and information literacy instruction components of this role. This teaching aspect of librarianship is the part of library work that I love, the part where I feel I can really make a difference.

In my new role at the SBS library I conduct tailored information literacy programs for SBS students. This involves a compulsory intensive library orientation session and a follow up Advanced Research Seminar which I designed to teach more complex information literacy concepts. Working at the SBS involves assisting students studying at a postgraduate level, including international students. Teaching information literacy to international students can be challenging. In some cases, language difficulties can interfere with the learning process.

In both the orientation and advanced research sessions, I include practical exercises as well as demonstrations that allow the students to apply their new search skills. The practical exercises also allow me to go over the search strategies with students that may not have understood the methodology during the class. The workshop resources (PowerPoint presentations) are made available to students to review the content and concepts from the session at their own pace. This, coupled with the online information literacy tutorials developed by the Wollongong campus library staff, supports the cross section of student learning preferences as they gain information literacy skills.

Like many tertiary students, international students often turn to Google as a major source for locating information. Part of my role in both training sessions and working with students in the library involves educating SBS students in the value of using online databases that contain scholarly, academic literature, rather than just Googling. Another issue I have found is that some SBS students limit their searching to the more user-friendly databases like Proquest, potentially limiting their research results. I am currently working to encourage SBS students to use alternative databases with a business focus, such as Business Source Premier and Emerald. I have found students are more likely to use a range of different databases when I demonstrate the search techniques specific to each database that result in relevant search results. When students have a better understanding of academic databases and their search functionality they are more likely to use them.

Another challenge in working with international students involves overcoming the reliance of some students on hardcopy resources. Some of the international students will tend to automatically use solely hardcopy resources for assignments, ignoring the range of online scholarly literature available. Again, my role involves educating these students about the value of academic online resources available to them as Wollongong University students. Often I find that students have struggled to use academic databases and find locating books easier. I work with these students to

locate relevant material in online databases increasing their search skills and explain the importance of using journal articles to locate current, specific, peer-reviewed information in addition to hardcopy texts.

I am the only librarian working at the Sydney Business School library, which can be demanding, especially as a new graduate. Having no other librarian in the immediate vicinity has enabled me to increase my skills due to necessity. I am also very fortunate that the range of staff from different departments at the UOW main campus library who I have called upon for help are extremely supportive and have been particularly helpful, especially when I commenced my role at the SBS. The SBS is based in two campuses, Sydney and Wollongong. At the time of writing, the SBS is recruiting a librarian for the new Innovation campus in Wollongong, so I will soon be part of a SBS library team.

As a new graduate I find teaching international students information literacy very rewarding. I would encourage other new graduates to work in information literacy teaching roles if the opportunity arises, even if it is only temporary. I have found that while developing my information literacy programs I have increased my own understanding of the sources that I was demonstrating, which in turn has made me a better librarian. I have also found that introducing further information literacy instruction to the SBS campus has increased library usage. Students who attended these classes have increased their use of library reference services, asking me for help in the library when looking for resources for assignments and tutorials. Teaching information literacy classes made me more approachable to students, as well as demonstrating to students that I am a valuable information resource during their study at SBS.

After graduating from UTS Melissa Smith began her library career working in Sydney University Law library and running the Sydney University Centre for English Teaching library; she later moved on to the Migration & Refugee Review Tribunals Research and Information Service. Melissa is currently the librarian at the Wollongong University Sydney Business School (SBS) located in Sydney's CBD. Her role involves running the SBS library and conducting information literacy programs for SBS students.

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...gives a voice to the new generation of library and information professionals. If you have any suggestions or topics for this column, please contact the column co-ordinator Naomi Doessel, [naomidoessel@gmail.com](mailto:naomidoessel@gmail.com)