



Browsing, Networking, Contextualizing: Research Practices of Humanists and Implications for Library Instruction

Carl Lehnen and Glenda M. Insua

abstract: Using semi-structured interviews of faculty in literature, culture, and writing studies at a large public research university, this study investigates their research practices to help rethink disciplinary dimensions of information literacy. Findings showed a strong social dimension to their information-seeking practices and a reliance on informal methods. Themes that emerged were disciplinary perspectives, browsing and serendipity, colleagues and community, limitations in access and time constraints, and informal research training. The authors discuss implications for instruction, including ways in which librarians might demystify humanities research for graduate and upper level undergraduate students.

Introduction

From nineteenth-century German philosopher Wilhelm Dilthey's distinction between humanistic "understanding" and scientific "explanation" to behavioral psychologist Anthony Biglan's distinctions between disciplines that are hard or soft, pure or applied, and life system or nonlife system, scholars have found important differences in the aims, methods, and assumptions of different disciplines.¹ Librarians and information science researchers have been especially interested in how information literacy varies depending on discipline. According to Robert Farrell and William Badke, information literacy is not an especially meaningful concept to most faculty, who understand information-seeking as embedded in disciplinary practices, not as a generic set of interchangeable skills.² Based on interviews with faculty in different disciplines,

portal: Libraries and the Academy, Vol. 21, No. 2 (2021), pp. 275–297.

Copyright © 2021 by Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD 21218.

Vesa Kautto and Sanna Talja state that “what is currently understood as higher order information literacy, abilities going beyond database and web searching skills . . . are inherently domain specific in nature, and, as such, cannot be meaningfully taught as

A focus on disciplinary practices can aid outreach as librarians pitch information literacy using the language and concerns of disciplinary audiences, and advocate for the importance of higher-level information literacy instruction beyond “where to click.”

separate from disciplinary discourses, contents, and contexts.” Likewise, teaching that is appropriate in one context may be “confusing, and even harmful” in another.³

A focus on disciplinary practices can aid outreach as librarians pitch information literacy using the language and concerns of disciplinary audiences, and advocate for the importance of higher-level information literacy instruction beyond “where to click.”⁴ This approach also aligns with the recommendations of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education to think holistically and take into account the

contextually dependent nature of source evaluation and information seeking.⁵ While many sections of ACRL (including the Literatures in English Section) are currently adapting the Framework to suit disciplinary information literacy instruction, librarians can turn to the general Framework for inspiration in devising more robust teaching for humanities students.

This exploratory study grew out of a larger effort conducted by Ithaka S+R and the Modern Language Association and published in 2020.⁶ The larger study explored the research practices of academics in literatures, culture (for example, folklore, performance studies, and literary history), and writing studies at 14 universities throughout the United States. The current study uses semi-structured interviews to gain clarity into the research practices of academics to demystify their methods for graduate students and upper level undergraduate students in literatures, culture, and writing studies. While particularly focused on literary studies and related disciplines, the authors believe the findings have relevance to other humanities disciplines as well. Although many studies have investigated the information practices of professors in various fields, this study explores how librarians might design better instructional opportunities for students in literatures and associated areas of study by analyzing the more informal methods used by literature, culture, and writing faculty.

Literature Review

Sue Stone’s seminal review of the research practices and needs of humanist scholars found that some characteristics have held up over time: humanists work with a wide range of materials, especially primary sources, and the secondary literature maintains relevance much longer than that in social science disciplines. Humanists are more likely to find documents through such informal means as browsing, colleagues, and citation chaining rather than through formal bibliographies and indexes; and they tend to work alone. Subsequent studies and reviews have confirmed and expanded on these findings.⁷



Stephen Stoa reviewed the literature on academic research practices of various fields to discover implications for library services and library instruction. He argued that earlier user studies underestimated the many informal methods scholars use to locate sources, bypassing traditional bibliographic indexing services.⁸ According to Stoa, these informal approaches “emphasize information-retrieval channels that offer guidance from other experts in their fields, whether in the form of informal communication through invisible colleges, consultation with colleagues, . . . or paying close attention to the literature cited by other scholars in their monographs or articles.” Stoa emphasized the social context of academe, in which scholars become immersed, as well as the nonlinear, unpredictable nature of a research project. For such research, consulting the literature “is but one dimension of a complex intellectual process.”⁹

One influential model of information seeking comes from Daniel Ellis, who critiqued quantitative, “objectivist” approaches to understanding information-seeking behavior. Rather than relying on what he calls the “information retrieval model,” which understands information seeking in terms of users interacting with systems to request documents that they evaluate for relevance, Ellis conducted informal, semi-structured interviews with researchers in a variety of disciplines to inductively uncover how they understand their own research process.¹⁰ In looking at social scientists, natural scientists, and literature researchers, he identified several categories of information-seeking activities with some degree of overlap between researchers in different fields. For literature, the categories consisted of: (1) starting the research process, (2) surveying the literature in an area of study, (3) chaining from one citation to another, (4) selecting and sifting which references to focus on or prune, (5) monitoring key sources to keep up with developments in a field, and (6) assembling and disseminating the results of research. Carole Palmer and Laura Neumann extended Ellis’s work by examining the specific strategies that humanities researchers employ when crossing disciplinary boundaries by browsing in areas beyond their expertise, maintaining many sources of information to prime for future discovery, and learning the language and conventions of other fields.¹¹

Another strain of research looks at the disciplinary characteristics of literature and language study, often noting the relatively loose disciplinary coherence of modern language departments, with little more than the language providing a common focus.¹² As Tony Becher observes, “Modern languages might be designated as a cluster of related disciplines, rather than a single unity . . . split, not only between literary critics and linguistic scholars, but also within the former between advocates of conflicting theories.”¹³ Nonlinguists might focus on film or popular culture instead of literature or even turn to a social science approach.¹⁴

By interviewing faculty from multiple disciplines about how they evaluate sources, Kautto and Talja uncovered important differences in the underlying assumptions about what counts as knowledge.¹⁵ Unlike scientific disciplines with broad agreement on the most important problems and methods, literary scholarship is theoretically and meth-

Humanists are more likely to find documents through such informal means as browsing, colleagues, and citation chaining rather than through formal bibliographies and indexes

This mss is peer reviewed, copy edited and accepted for publication, portal 21.2.

odologically eclectic, and its scholars often take ideas and approaches from outside their own discipline. Faculty in Kautto and Talja's study stressed the importance of reading widely if not systematically, even if they only cited a small fraction of what they read. Because selecting materials to read was based more on relevance to a theoretical conversation rather than topic or document type, those scholars saw database searching alone as having limited value unless supplemented by broad knowledge and familiarity with the history of the discipline.

Other studies have focused specifically on humanities scholars or on disciplinary subsets. Clara Chu focused on the information needs of literary scholars and proposed a six-stage model of idea generation, preparation, elaboration, analysis and writing, dissemination, and further writing and dissemination.¹⁶ The model, however, was not meant to represent a linear process; she admitted to "fuzziness" between stages that led to variability within the model.¹⁷ William Brockman, Laura Neumann, Carole Palmer, and Tonyia Tidline interviewed humanities scholars in a variety of disciplines about their research practices, including their use of technology. Brockman's team found four important types of activities: reading, networking, researching, and writing. These efforts were ongoing throughout the research process, and most scholars noted that technology made their research "easier, faster, and more up-to-date," a finding echoed by Ellen Collins and Michael Jubb.¹⁸ Harriet Lönnqvist found variability among humanities researchers, noting differences between the practices of humanities disciplines.¹⁹

A rich literature attempts to apply these findings to librarians' professional practice, and many of these confront a certain tension. On the one hand, humanists have

... humanists have a reputation of being frequent library users, and a trope describes the library as "the humanist's laboratory."

a reputation of being frequent library users, and a trope describes the library as "the humanist's laboratory." On the other hand, most studies find that humanists are infrequent users of library services and unlikely to consult a librarian for help, especially when it comes to secondary literature.²⁰ Stoa also concluded that the informal methods used

by researchers were adequate and that efforts by librarians to change their ways were both unnecessary and likely to fail.²¹

Others, though, have seen more possibility in library instruction for students.²² John East reviewed the literature on research practices to propose learning objectives for an information literacy class for humanities researchers.²³ These objectives included understanding how information is disseminated in the discipline, identifying appropriate bibliographic tools, searching databases effectively, keeping current, obtaining material not available locally, establishing a network of contacts, consulting library staff, and organizing references effectively. However, he does not explain how exactly these skills would be taught and phrases most objectives in terms of gaining understanding or awareness rather than developing specific competencies. Peggy Keeran also articulated that librarians' teaching role would be useful primarily to students, helping a novice broaden or narrow a topic, or assisting more advanced students in identifying subject headings, conducting Boolean searches, and locating specialized databases.²⁴ Jill Newby proposed an information literacy class for graduate students based in part on Ellis's

categories, therefore foregrounding the particularities of research in a discipline, such as disciplinary culture, learning how scholars in a field typically approach different kinds of problems, and keeping up with the literature through networking.²⁵

Other studies of graduate students focus on library services and the nature of graduate student research.²⁶ Andy Barrett found that graduate students in the humanities resembled undergraduates in that they often lacked deep subject knowledge and relied on guidance from professors, but they were like faculty in that they were intrinsically motivated, treated research as detective work, and collaborated with peers.²⁷ He also notes that targeting instruction at graduate students can provide future benefits, as their “evolving research habits will influence a lifetime of scholarship to follow.”²⁸

The purpose of this study is to understand the research practices of faculty in literature, culture, and writing studies, especially the more informal methods that are not overtly taught, to demystify these practices for students and to develop more robust disciplinary information literacy instruction.

Methods

After obtaining a claim of exemption from the university's Institutional Review Board, the two investigators invited literature, culture, and writing studies faculty to participate in one-on-one semi-structured interviews regarding their research habits, needs, and support. Inclusion criteria included tenure-track or tenured professors in the three disciplines, who would have research responsibilities built into their everyday work. Language and linguistics professors were excluded from the study, as their research was deemed too disparate from the other fields of study. To capture the breadth of faculty aligned with these disciplines, researchers sent e-mails to department heads for recruitment as well as to individual faculty members who fit the inclusion criteria. At the research site, the literature, culture, and writing professors hold academic positions in several departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Within the college, the School of Literatures, Cultural Studies and Linguistics houses French and Francophone Studies, Germanic Studies, Hispanic and Italian Studies, and Polish, Russian, and Lithuanian Studies. English is a department itself and part of the college. All departments offer a BA, MA, and PhD, except for French, which awards a BA and MA. Professors who focused on linguistics or language pedagogy, whether in the Department of Linguistics or another language department, were not included as part of the study.

The investigators contacted faculty members in the English, French, German, Polish, and Spanish departments via e-mail to explain the study and seek participants. Thirteen agreed to be interviewed; however, due to scheduling conflicts, only 12 participated: five professors of English (two of whom studied rhetoric), two of Spanish, two of French, two of German, and one of Polish. There were three assistant professors, seven associate professors, and two full professors. This convenience sample did not aim to represent the population at the research site or nationally. Rather, the range of disciplines and ranks sought to maximize variation.²⁹ The goal was to describe research practices with rich detail rather than to establish the number of researchers using such practices.

Each interview was conducted in the faculty member's campus office by one of the two investigators and lasted between 40 and 80 minutes. Investigators used interview



questions developed by Ithaka S+R for their nationwide multisite research project on supporting the research needs of scholars of literature, cultural studies, and rhetoric (see the Appendix). Each interview was audio recorded and transcribed by an outside service. One subject did not wish to be recorded, so detailed notes were taken during the interview, and this subject is not quoted verbatim. Interviewees did not receive an incentive for participation.

Before transcript analysis, the investigators created codes together based on interview questions. Each investigator then coded the transcripts independently. After this initial separate analysis, the investigators reviewed the transcripts together. They then chose several of the most prevalent codes and coding clusters and divided the choices between themselves to review in depth. The investigators then discussed these codes together, and through this discussion, several major themes emerged.

Findings

The faculty members interviewed for this project spoke at length about their research habits, detailing their processes from idea formation to publication. Although some differences emerged among those interviewed, several topics seemed universally important. The authors categorized these topics as disciplinary perspectives, browsing and serendipity, colleagues and community, limitations in access and time constraints, and informal research training. These major themes are detailed in the following sections.

Disciplinary Perspectives

The scholars interviewed discussed a wide variety of research interests and theoretical orientations, suggesting that literature and language studies is highly eclectic both in terms of content and method. When asked if their research was typical of the work done by others in their field or department, only 3 of the 12 respondents claimed much commonality. One described her scholarship as typical of the department but not of the wider field, and another said his work had more in common with the field of rhetoric but much less with the English Department. Some saw themselves as unique because no one else had their specialization. For example, one said, "Everybody's doing their own thing in this department. There's not a high degree of overlap between anybody really." In other cases, the scholars employed an unusual method (for example, ethnography), saw themselves as less strictly focused on literature (as opposed, for example, to history, cognitive psychology, or political theory), or viewed their work as pertaining to a subdiscipline or interdisciplinary area (for example, rhetoric or Jewish studies) rather than to a linguistic or national framework.

Indeed, many of the scholars spoke of their work as interdisciplinary. One professor noted that "rhetoric has always been interdisciplinary in its structures, in its concerns, and so on." Another mentioned that the work has been "consumed and cited as much by people in different fields [sociolinguistics, sociology, history, Jewish studies] as it is in my field." Another spoke about the rewards of doing interdisciplinary work: "I'm at the intersection of two fields that have had this chasm between them, and I'm trying to create a field of scholars that are bridging that, filling that in, reweaving a fabric that got torn apart."



Despite this interdisciplinarity, something fundamental united all this work under the umbrella of the humanities. The participants saw research as highly individualistic. As one professor put it, "I also find, for people in the humanities, that a huge part of doing our work is the craft of expressing your work, and not the finding, the other stuff." Another professor mentioned similar ideas and discussed explaining to students the nature of humanistic research:

That's what I always tell my students, that the difference between the humanities and the natural and physical sciences is that you're discovering something that's true, but it's not discoverable without you. If you're studying plants, the plant is always going to be the plant. If you're an engineer, you might manipulate the plant and change it, but you're studying phenomena that empirically exist, but the burden of being a humanist is, if you don't write this, no one else is going to.

Because of the subjective nature of research in the humanities, the process of framing a topic or developing a theoretical approach was often as important as locating documents or seeking information.

Browsing and Serendipity

All 12 professors talked about employing a variety of methods to find information, such as searching multiple general and specialized databases, browsing the stacks, using Amazon and Google, and scanning publisher ads in journals and conference programs. Many of the scholars described their research efforts in terms reminiscent of detective work as they recalled following up on leads, comparing sources, seeking out informants, and relying on the occasional hunch. Professors reported using databases as only one strategy for information seeking, one that was often exploratory. Beyond searching databases, the participants highlighted a variety of methods defined more by holistic practices of engaging with their areas of study and collegial networks rather than discrete attempts to address well-defined information needs. Professors reported that many of their greatest finds took place "accidentally" while they engaged in other activities, for example, while attending conferences or workshops, socializing with colleagues, or reading for other purposes. Almost all the scholars mentioned serendipity; they happened to be in the right place at the right time, which led them to a discovery.

Many of the scholars described their research efforts in terms reminiscent of detective work as they recalled following up on leads, comparing sources, seeking out informants, and relying on the occasional hunch.

Those who worked with physical archives reported that such materials could be especially transformative in generating new ideas for research. In other words, instead of starting with a well-defined question, the scholars immersed themselves in a set of documents that led them to a new idea. Of particular importance were specialized collections, where, as one professor commented, "I could walk through and [find] stuff that I didn't even know existed and that were all in the same space." Others described

the need for extensive browsing to find a relevant item, “going through years and years of journals” or “you just sit with the microfilm and make yourself nauseous scrolling, until you hit upon something.”

Poring over texts was central to the work of scholars in literature and rhetoric, whether browsing documents in an archive or continually rereading the same texts to gain new insights. Five professors regarded archives and special collections as central to their scholarship. One described research as arising from time spent immersed in sources without initially having a question or agenda and relying to an extent on chance or serendipity. The interviewees reported browsing extensive collections related to the topic at hand, even if the materials were only tangential to the ultimate scope, to get the full documentary context. This casual reading was especially difficult when the major collections were abroad or required travel. Indeed, of the five professors who used archives and special collections, all reported a certain amount of travel. One professor of Spanish literature noted: “With the type of work I do, my challenge in the States is to start the project because I think I do like to have some kind of archival basis to what I do, even though it might end up not being necessary in the final part. But at least it gives me the sense that I have this lay of the land more or less figured out.”

Even when materials were online and searchable, scholars faced many difficulties in identifying relevant materials, especially in unfamiliar areas. One professor talked about the difficulty of searching for a topic, since keywords brought up many documents that were out of scope. In such cases, professors browsed extensively until the relevant authors could be identified, or they turned to citation chaining to bypass the formal indexing of databases. For example, one professor talked about getting around the limitations of databases by finding one relevant new article and mining the citations:

I start, usually, with a search on either [Modern Language Association] International Bibliography, JSTOR, Project MUSE, or Google Scholar [and] look often for the most recent article I can find, if it really fits with the topic and then hope that that person has already done a lot of this research for me. If I go straight to their sources, either at the footnotes or the very end, the works cited, I can then start to expand from there.

Colleagues and Communities

When discussing their research practices, professors frequently mentioned colleagues and scholarly communities, both online and off. Forming and maintaining relationships was an important part of the scholars’ work, leading to information discovery, new skills, and collaboration. Although coauthorship was rare among the professors

Forming and maintaining relationships was an important part of the scholars’ work, leading to information discovery, new skills, and collaboration.

interviewed (only two professors discussed it), the interviewees frequently mentioned more informal methods of cooperation. Professors reached out to colleagues to find important sources, to learn about a new field when doing interdisciplinary work, to find partners for conference panels and presentations, and to encourage and support one another’s work.



When discussing colleagues, professors mentioned both those from their own university and those from other institutions in their disciplines or adjacent fields. Several professors reported sharing their work or suggesting sources and ideas for others to consider. One professor observed, "I'm very collective about scholarship. I'm not at all competitive. I think we should all do our part and then benefit from each other's work." Another noted the generosity of colleagues and a personal inclination to help, especially for items that are rare or difficult to locate: "The people are generous. It's interesting. I have not found people protective of their materials." Professors often called on colleagues to help them fill gaps in their knowledge. One remarked, "I know I have friends who are great bibliographers. I will check with them periodically: 'Do you know, is there something that I haven't found, is there something extra?'" In this type of instance, friends and colleagues became another type of information resource.

Professors reported using social media to interact with colleagues from other institutions. The use of social media among the group varied, with five professors utilizing it extensively for professional purposes, four not using it at all, and two employing it occasionally, but with some reservations. Use or nonuse was not obviously correlated to age or rank. The professors who used social media referred to Facebook most often, although Twitter was also mentioned. They used Facebook for a variety of purposes, such as marketing work, keeping current, learning about conferences and other events, and even accessing information. One professor mentioned facilitating a Facebook group where academics share works in progress and keep up with the field, explaining, "A lot of it is, 'I want to read stuff about this. What should I read?' or, 'Who is working on this?'" This individual found the Facebook group helpful but admitted it was "depressing" to see how many people had to use social media as a way of accessing information not found in their own library collections.

Professors working with literatures outside the United States or the United Kingdom found Facebook particularly useful. One noted:

[It] has been incredibly helpful for me because there are things that I would not have learned if it were not for Facebook. Sometimes that's where I see calls for conferences or about the publication of the book or articles or some less traditional services like some online news organizations or things that I would not have learned about.

Another scholar was wary of Facebook for privacy reasons but still found it useful in keeping current: "I never post anything, but in fact Facebook is one of the most important ways for me to understand what is going on in my field. And I would know very little of what I know if it weren't for all those wonderful people willing to post."

Scholars also spoke of collaborating with colleagues in person, usually at conferences or in professional organizations. Even professors who did not use social media regarded meeting fellow scholars at conferences an important part of their research process. They saw it as a way of networking and staying current with their field. Because of their deep knowledge of the subjects they studied, professors often observed that they thought of searching the "literature" not only in terms of documents and information, but also in terms of colleagues and fellow scholars. One professor worried about the limitations of database searching, explaining, "The keywords that I might have in mind might not be the ones that have ended up in a library catalog." Instead, that scholar relied on a mental directory: "I might think, 'What person has written about X topic?'"



One professor discussed how theoretical sources could be especially difficult to search for in a direct way and instead found it necessary to rely on citations or tips from colleagues:

That kind of thing where another reader will tell me what I should be looking for, or I'll go to a conference and I'll hear someone referring to a theory or a theoretical framework in someone else's paper. If I'm not currently in an existing seminar, or summer workshop, or getting feedback on a paper, I wouldn't know how to look for a theory that went with my model I'm trying to figure out. Where would I even start?

When discussing their research, professors thought in terms of overlapping communities of scholars, and the existing practices and conversations within those communities made a big difference in how they positioned themselves. In this context, interdisciplinary research could be both enriching and challenging. For example, one professor whose research straddled two fields decided to put a research project on hold because it seemed necessary to first translate some major findings from one field to the other. Another whose work involved both film studies and history said that appropriate primary sources were difficult to locate because neither film scholars nor historians had traditionally paid much attention to them. Yet another was interested in topics that overlapped with work in sociology and psychology, but the claims made in those other fields differed from those appropriate to make in literary and cultural studies.

Social relationships and differences in academic culture also influenced publication decisions. One assistant professor spoke about difficulties navigating relationships with European colleagues who face different requirements for tenure. When asked to contribute to conference proceedings, this professor had to weigh whether to say "yes" to maintain a relationship with the conference organizer or to concentrate on journal articles and books that carried more weight for tenure. Another mentioned having the goal of being accepted into the community of scholars and publishers in the country studied, which sometimes meant taking on projects with high visibility in that country but less prominence in the United States. Likewise, another found that the journals and publishers which were especially important in her subdiscipline were not always well known to other literature scholars.

Limitations in Access and Limitations in Time

One major theme that emerged from discussions about searching was the tension caused by limitations in access and limitations in time. Many researchers mentioned lacking access to everything they wanted. One found it difficult to search for topics, either because of imprecise vocabulary or because items were not indexed or described in sufficient detail. One spoke of frustrations with the library databases, especially all the "clicking rigmarole" necessary to find something. Others noted limitations in what was searchable or what was accessible. For example, one had found "certain constraints, where some of our subscription levels to even those top databases, they won't return results to us if I do it through the library portal." Others mentioned databases for which the library did not have subscriptions, necessitating travel to other university libraries to access them. Yet another stated that Google was often more useful for finding information about



newer authors who may not have been the subject of books or journal articles. Several professors used Google Books or Amazon to access snippets of text to see if a book was worth checking out from the library. Many people used combinations of these tools as a starting point to track down citations.

For every instance in which professors described a lack of access to resources or difficulties tracking down certain kinds of information, there were other cases when a lack of time was the issue. One way of addressing this problem was to concentrate on the research they saw as highest quality, with professional reputation as a useful proxy for quality: “The people whose thinking really influences you, you read their bibliographies very carefully. And, since there’s way more stuff out there than you have time to [read], you have to kind of accept that you’re only going to see a small part of it, and this is the area that strikes you as being the most promising.”

One professor pointed to the sheer magnitude of academic output to explain why scholarly influence was of greater interest than comprehensiveness:

I think it’s not necessarily actually locating the materials, but in winnowing down what’s actually relevant, right? The problem used to be that you had to work with the sources that you were able to get ahold of, and then a very, very small select number of them would actually be relevant and you could run with one or two. And now, with the ability to find everything that everybody’s writing—except that one thing that you actually need—really [homing] in on whose voice matters.

Another professor discussed the importance of developing new ideas or approaches over comprehensive coverage, which might even detract from a pursuit of originality: “I’ve never done a systematic bibliography because it’s not for me a priority. My emphasis is on new ideas, new theoretical approaches that I’m trying to develop. I don’t have time, it’s not worth it for me to emphasize making sure that I’ve found everything that was written.”

For the same reason, one professor mentioned not needing to consult a librarian, since an unsystematic search turned up sufficient sources for the purpose. One even claimed to be a “bad researcher” who nevertheless managed to find what was needed. Another had given little thought to the mechanics of database searching because existing subject knowledge sufficed:

I’ve already had enough to do with sources that I know about. In other words, my work at the moment isn’t really being handicapped by the fact that I’m limited as a researcher. I mean, I have more than enough material at the moment to keep me pretty confident that working with what I have, there might be more stuff to bring in, but I don’t think my viewpoint is going to be completely changed by some research discovery that will invalidate it.

Still, there was some support for an exhaustive approach. Even professors who said they did not feel a need to be systematic also said they relied on the work of colleagues who did aim at comprehensiveness. One professor described the practice of merely “moving from source to source” or following citations without thorough searching, as an “unhealthy trend in research these days.” That professor gave assignments to graduate students that forced them to do an “exhaustive review of the literature” and



practice an “economy of scale with secondary sources.” Another referred to a reliance on citations as a “fast and dirty way to do it” that can be successful for canonical texts but inadequate for less studied authors or topics.

A few also observed that how much they needed depended on the type of research they were doing and their familiarity with the area. For example, one said of an upcoming project, “I’m going to need to be more systematic about the research because I’m learning a new field.” Another recalled doing research on an interdisciplinary project:

It did feel different, maybe that’s, again, a literary versus history division, the literature, there seemed to be more, and it was more so a matter of limiting the amount I found, whereas with the section of the book that was on history, it was actually about trying to find as much as I could because there really was very little written about these topics

In another case of research with primary sources, a professor who moved from interpretations of the published text to examining its composition history and the sources the author drew upon in composing it had to dig deeply and examine many materials.

Still, for most situations, participants seemed satisfied with more informal methods that lacked comprehensiveness because they felt that exhaustive research was unnecessary or they prioritized something else. In all these cases, the sheer magnitude of scholarly literature was recognized as a challenge involving trade-offs of time and resources.

Informal Research Training

The most common response to questions about how professors had learned to do research was that they had not received any formal instruction. Many said they were self-taught and learned along the way. Others mentioned informal training, usually through a mentor or colleague; and only one recalled taking a dedicated research course on bibliography as an undergraduate. However, most expressed a need for further training, either for

The most common response to questions about how professors had learned to do research was that they had not received any formal instruction.

themselves or their students. Interestingly, the types of training they discussed ranged well beyond locating sources, from learning the subject matter and key methods of their disciplines to understanding how to choose which journals to publish in or how to apply for grants.

Learning by trial and error was a common theme in the interviews, often accompanied by the desire for a simpler, more rational process. As one professor stated, “I would have loved to have received more training than I got, but it was all trial

and error for me. And it was kind of through failing a lot of times that I worked out a research process that produces those levels of scholarship that I want to produce.”

In the absence of formal instruction, participants reported relying on piecemeal help, either from professors or fellow students. One mentioned that, during graduate school, professors “tended to assume that we already knew [everything]” and so it “was a matter of asking friends and then really just getting used to seeing what works with what type of text you’re looking for.” Another discussed what might be understood as



a process of “reverse engineering” from what professors did or from clues embedded in publications: “I think I learned a lot by having to sit down and deconstruct on my own how someone else set up their argument, and how they must have found their sources, and kind of try to imagine what the life of the article was before the article came to be an article.”

When it came to what training they thought would be useful for students or younger scholars, many discussed trying to make explicit the tacit knowledge or assumptions of experienced researchers. For instance, one spoke about teaching students to be more reflective about searching in light of how they want to frame their topics, for example by using filters, trying synonyms, and resorting to adjacent or analogous topics when their initial searches failed to produce results. Another said, “I try with students who are working with me to actually explain why I’m asking them to do things and where that is in the process.”

Finally, choosing journals, getting published, and promoting one’s work were areas in which professors saw a need for more training. One mentioned teaching graduate students to understand the “genres” of different publications by browsing the tables of contents of a journal over time and reading a few issues cover to cover:

[It’s important] to figure out what the styles are of particular journal presses. What their house methods are, what kinds of idioms they tend to work in, what niches in the field they tend to support. Because that’s how you can get published in those places. Or that’s how you can know the best possible journal to send your thing to.

Overall, discussions of research training centered on informal methods such as trial and error or modeling expert behavior. At the same time, most professors expressed a desire for more formal training even if they were uncertain what it should look like, especially when entering unfamiliar areas.

Discussion

Despite many questions focused on techniques for finding information, respondents said little about database searching or interacting with library systems. Humanists had many methods of finding new information that involved minimal use of library databases. Some even spoke of being a “bad researcher” with regard to navigating the library or tracking down sources, without any implication that they considered themselves poor scholars. Instead, they spoke of other informal methods of keeping up to date with their fields, such as citation tracking, getting recommendations from colleagues, or coming across documents serendipitously. This disjunction between librarians’ and professors’ notions of research implies that there may be an opportunity for librarians to rethink how they teach research skills. This discussion will focus on three areas that librarians should consider when planning instruction: the role of browsing in humanities research, social networking as an information literacy skill, and the nature of comprehensiveness and disciplinary context in literary research.

Humanists had many methods of finding new information that involved minimal use of library databases.

Explanations for the emphasis on informal and social methods in humanities have tended to connect it to the nature and assumptions of humanistic research and to the limitations of bibliographic and indexing tools. As Rebecca Green notes, "In general, bibliographic tools observe well-defined boundaries of coverage relative to subject, date, format, and language. But the literature relevant to a question may not respect the same boundaries, especially in the humanities."³⁰ Stephen Wiberley also notes the imprecision of much of the humanist's terminology as opposed to the jargon of the natural sciences and the resultant difficulties for subject access. Wiberley points out, however, that the humanistic focus on people, places, events, and artistic works means that proper nouns can supply some of the precision missing from a humanist's topical and theoretical vocabulary.³¹ As a point of comparison, historians are another group with eclectic reading habits, and a recent study found that only 21 percent of the secondary literature cited in the *American Historical Review* was discoverable in either of the two major subject databases for history, Historical Abstracts and America: History and Life.³²

One implication for pedagogy, especially for graduate students, would be to de-emphasize point-of-need search techniques in favor of more explicit teaching of the ongoing, informal methods that scholars speak of picking up through trial and error. The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy can be a useful tool for librarians in this regard. The frame "Searching as Strategic Exploration," with its emphasis on nonlinear and contextualized information seeking, provides a good starting point for librarians planning instruction. It also highlights "inquiry, discovery, and serendipity" as important aspects of searching.³³ This matches some of the methods highlighted by Ellis, especially

The frame "Searching as Strategic Exploration," with its emphasis on nonlinear and contextualized information seeking, provides a good starting point for librarians planning instruction.

surveying, the type of semi-purposeful exploration done to familiarize oneself with an area of potential interest, and monitoring, the process of maintaining awareness of new developments in a field.³⁴ Both activities require the mental flexibility and creativity that are called for in the frame's dispositions. Participants spoke about both surveying and monitoring, though without using those terms, in reference both to research projects and to the habitual information-seeking activities

that go on parallel to or between more focused lines of inquiry. Reading widely and maintaining awareness of key works and journals, or as Palmer and Neumann described it, "priming for future discovery," allowed the researchers to prepare for moments of apparent serendipity.³⁵

Such habits are developed over the course of years as students evolve into scholars, but librarians can act as "disciplinary discourse mediators" who break down the knowledge of the expert researcher for the benefit of the novice and can prompt students to try out these strategies.³⁶ Newby has proposed a semester-length class taught by librarians that focuses on discipline-specific cultures and skills, but briefer teaching sessions may also offer opportunities to demystify disciplinary research practices.³⁷ For example, one of the authors of the present study led two class sessions within a graduate seminar on professionalization for students in literature and linguistics. After an initial session in which



the class discussed research challenges they face as graduate students and disciplinary differences in the information-seeking strategies relevant to their fields, they completed an assignment to establish habits related to surveying and monitoring. Students had to identify a relevant article in a source that could help familiarize them with a new field (for example, a handbook or a book of essays from the *Cambridge Companion* series) to practice surveying the literature. To engage in monitoring, students had to identify two important journals in their field and review issues from the past two years, as well as scan a relevant article in the most recent issue of the *Year's Work in Modern Language Studies*, an annual bibliography of scholarly books and articles. To identify journals, students reported asking a professor or, in one case, following up on publications already cited for a previous paper. In a subsequent class, students shared what they had found, and the journals were compiled into a master list that all students could access. Librarians working with graduate students can use such exercises to help students learn and practice the informal research methods that faculty employ as a matter of course.

Although librarians might be tempted to fault professors for their unsystematic and informal processes, our research implies that database searching may not be particularly useful for research in the humanities and that professors manage to be effective researchers by leveraging their subject knowledge and social networks. A second implication for library instruction is that students may also need to develop similar habits, as appropriate, such as reflecting on prior knowledge to formulate information-seeking strategies and leveraging social contacts, whether among classmates or professors, to find leads. As teachers, we can share our expertise in navigating library systems and databases, but an understanding of how and why scholars deploy informal and often socially oriented techniques and how these relate to the assumptions and goals of the discipline can help us become more nuanced consultants and research partners. Kautto and Talja even note that teaching systematic searching by topic to literature majors as one would to students in other disciplines, such as medicine, would be detrimental. They explain that literature students risk “getting sidetracked, having their minds fragmented by the many different approaches and viewpoints present in the text retrieved.”³⁸

Some interviewees claim that their deep knowledge of the discipline and frequent contacts mean that they had no shortage of material. This assertion aligns with previous findings that humanities scholars tend to use article indexes and comprehensive bibliographies only when they venture into new areas beyond their area of specialization.³⁹ It also relates to several characteristics of research in the humanities, namely the need for the humanities scholar to be deeply familiar with a wide variety of texts and the long shelf life of secondary literature, since sources might become dated without being superseded by newer ones.⁴⁰

Because the humanities are more interested in interpretation than explanation or prediction, the importance of new perspectives depends on their relationship to previous analyses. This dialogic nature also means that, as Kautto and Talja found in their

...humanities scholars tend to use article indexes and comprehensive bibliographies only when they venture into new areas beyond their area of specialization

interviews with faculty, "The core skill in literature use was to stay within the boundaries of a particular theoretical conversation" rather than a topical domain. They added, "Since it is not possible to search databases using theoretical concepts or approaches, help from faculty experts was seen to be vital for this core task."⁴¹ This conversational aspect of research was especially visible in the interviews and permeated every aspect of the research process, from topic selection to gathering sources to presenting what was found. Even citation chaining can have a significant social aspect, as Wiberley noted when he described a citation in the bibliography of a respected colleague as a type of personal recommendation.⁴² These conversations are explicitly referred to in the ACRL frame "Scholarship as Conversation," which posits that scholarship is a "discursive practice in which ideas are formulated, debated, and weighed against one another over extended periods of time."⁴³ Whereas this frame emphasizes the cognitive and rationalistic processes of arriving at the truth through dialogue among competing perspectives, the research practices described by interviewees were explicitly conversational and social, hinging on personal contacts and an acute awareness of the overlapping communities of scholars and audiences in which they participate.

Scholars were intensely aware of webs of connection with other specialists and described different kinds of roles: formal coauthors; colleagues engaged in research on similar subject matter or using a similar theoretical approach, who might be known socially or only through their published work; personal contacts who passed on ideas or sources of information that turned out to be useful; and audiences, including close colleagues as well as readers outside their specialty or discipline. These findings confirm those by Brockman, Neumann, Palmer, and Tidline, who noted the importance of maintaining close collegial networks as an important part of the research process.⁴⁴

All this suggests that networking may be an important information literacy competency. Participants spoke of consulting colleagues as a crucial activity in keeping up with the field, identifying useful sources, and situating a topic or line of inquiry. While not generally considered a part of the library's teaching portfolio, there is growing interest in librarians' role as facilitators of communities of practice, groups of practitioners who interact with one another to learn to do their work better. Libraries provide a neutral space outside of departmental affiliation or faculty rewards and punishments where students with similar needs and interests can gather.⁴⁵ Libraries can multiply their instructional efforts by combining stand-alone workshops into multiday "boot camps" where graduate students build community while learning useful skills. Libraries can also increase their effectiveness by integrating into campus teaching and learning communities, or by pairing librarians with graduate students.⁴⁶

Scholars seldom fretted about missing something in areas they already knew well, where major features would not escape their notice. In other subjects, however, they had to be more systematic.

graduate students build community while learning useful skills. Libraries can also increase their effectiveness by integrating into campus teaching and learning communities, or by pairing librarians with graduate students.⁴⁶

Interviewees often made distinctions about when they needed to search comprehensively and when they could rely on a few representative examples. A third implication of these discussions for library instruction is that how much research or documentation is needed depends on disciplinary context and the intended use of the source, an



especially salient point for students who worry if they have “enough.” Scholars seldom fretted about missing something in areas they already knew well, where major features would not escape their notice. In other subjects, however, they had to be more systematic. This need for thoroughness seemed to apply to areas where they were less familiar or times when their research veered toward the empirical, whether in textual criticism where precedents or sources had to be established or while doing historical research using archival sources.

Because so much of the published scholarship in literature and rhetoric consists of interpretations of a relatively small number of texts, scholars have no need to be comprehensive when citing prior interpretations of the material being analyzed. Unless one’s aim is to produce a thorough history of previous criticism, it is only necessary to cite those studies that have relevance for one’s own argument. Even when the claims extend beyond the text, to social forms, historical periods, or cognition, comprehensiveness may not be particularly important. Because it is accepted practice in literary and cultural studies to draw rather broad generalizations based on deep readings of a small handful of artifacts, it is not necessary to accumulate vast quantities of examples if the interpretation of them is the same. The strength of the generalization is judged on the quality of the analysis, not the size of the sample, although the failure to address prominent counterexamples or differing views could, of course, undercut the interpretation. These epistemological goals and standards for evaluating scholarship explain how what might initially appear to be lax methods or incomplete research may be perfectly appropriate.

These distinctions come naturally to the experienced scholar but may not be obvious to novices without deep subject knowledge or prior socialization to the norms of citation in the humanities and rhetoric. One recommendation for teaching would be to make these distinctions more explicit instead of leaving them as tacit assumptions. During typical bibliographic instruction in the use of databases, a librarian could ask students to reflect on when they know they are finished searching or what would prompt them to return to a source-gathering phase of research. A more substantive lesson inspired by the BEAM (background, exhibit, argument, and method) model would have students read a research scenario and analyze the role played by different sources, or study an excerpt of a scholarly text and categorize the cited sources based on how they are used.⁴⁷ Such an exercise would aim to lead students to increased self-awareness about distinctions between sources, not only between primary sources to be analyzed and secondary sources that aid that analysis, but also between sources that provide context or background, those that establish a theoretical approach or method, and those that speak to alternative interpretations or help support an empirical claim about historical events or textual influences.

Conclusion

Interviews with these professors showed literature and writing studies to be an eclectic disciplinary zone, with a wide variety of research areas and approaches. Practices of information seeking were nonlinear and open-ended, and social networks, both real and virtual, played an important role. Because of the wide range of document types, subject areas, and historical periods with which humanists work, traditional library information



retrieval methods go only so far. The customary techniques must be supplemented by a variety of ongoing and informal methods to keep up with new developments and identify sources or theoretical approaches that are relevant to current research interests. Librarians can use this information in conjunction with the ACRL Framework to augment instruction for graduate and upper level undergraduate students beyond searching library systems to include these informal information-seeking habits that faculty use to succeed.

More research is needed to determine which pedagogical methods are most successful; the next steps in our research include interviewing graduate students about their information-seeking processes and experimenting with a variety of pedagogical techniques. By adopting a user-centric perspective and recognizing the particularities of disciplinary research, librarians can think creatively about library services and connect with students and scholars in meaningful ways.

Carl Lehnen is a reference and liaison librarian to the School of Literatures, Cultural Studies and Linguistics at the University of Illinois at Chicago; he may be reached by e-mail at: clehnen@uic.edu.

Glenda M. Insua is a reference and liaison librarian to the Departments of English, Music, and Theatre at the University of Illinois at Chicago; she may be reached by e-mail at: ginsua1@uic.edu.

Appendix

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

I. Research Focus and Methods

Describe the research project(s) you are currently working on.

- Tell me a bit more about how the research for the project has unfolded step-by-step (choose one project if multiple were listed above); e.g., developing the topic, identifying and working with the information needed for the research, plans for sharing the results.
- How does this project and process of researching relate to how you've done work in the past?
- How does this project relate to the work typically done in your department(s) and field(s) you are affiliated with?

II. Working with Archives and Other Special Collections

Do you typically rely on material collected in archives or other special collections (e.g., rare books, unpublished documents, museum artifacts)? If so,

- How do you find this information? How did you learn how to do this? Does anyone ever help you?
- Where do you access this information (e.g., on-site, digitally)?



- How and when do you work with this information, e.g., do you use any specific approaches or tools?
- Have you encountered any challenges in the process of finding, accessing, or working with this kind of information? If so, describe.
- To what extent do you understand and/or think it is important to understand how the tools that help you find and access this information work (e.g., finding aids, online museum catalogs)? “Do you understand how database X decides which content surfaces first in your searches?” and “Do you care to understand?”
- Are there any resources, services, or other supports that would help you more effectively work with this kind of information?

III. Working with Secondary Content

What kinds of secondary source content do you typically rely on do your research (e.g., scholarly articles or monographs)?

- How do you find this information? How did you learn to do this? Does anyone ever help you?
- Where do you access this information (e.g., on-site, digitally)?
- How and when do you work with this information (e.g., do you use any specific approaches or tools)?
- Have you encountered any challenges in the process of finding, accessing, or working with secondary sources? If so, describe.
- To what extent do you understand and/or think it is important to understand how the tools that help you find and access this information work (e.g., algorithmic bias, processes for creating and applying keywords)? “Do you understand how Google Scholar decides which articles surface first in your searches?” and “Do you care to understand?”
- Are there any resources, services, or other supports that would help you more effectively locate or work with secondary sources?

IV. Scholarly Communications and Evaluating Impact

How are your scholarly outputs (e.g., books, peer-reviewed journal articles) evaluated by your institution and to what ends (e.g., tenure and promotion process, frequency of evaluations)?

- Have you observed any trends and/or changes over time in how scholarly outputs are being evaluated (e.g., shift in emphasis between books versus articles, shift in emphasis in the extent to which the prestige or impact factor of a publication is considered)?
- Beyond tenure and promotion, does your institution evaluate your scholarly outputs toward any other ends (e.g., benchmarking your/your department’s performance using analytics software)? If so, how, and to what ends?
- What have been your experiences being evaluated in this way?
- Have you observed these kinds of processes having a larger effect on your department and/or institutional culture?

To what extent do you engage with or have interest in any mechanisms for sharing your work beyond traditional publishing in peer-reviewed journals or monographs? To



what ends (e.g., posting in preprint archives to share with peers, creating digital maps or timelines for students, creating outputs for wider audiences)?

Do you engage with any forms of social networking, including academic social networking, as a mechanism for sharing and/or engaging with other scholars? If no, why not? If so,

- Describe the platform(s) you currently use and how.
- What do you like best about the platform(s) you currently use, and what do you like least?
- Are there any other ways the platform(s) could be improved to best meet your needs?

Beyond the information you have already shared about your scholarly communications activities and needs, is there anything else you think would be helpful for me to know about your experiences?

V. Research Training and Wrapping Up

Looking back at your experiences as a researcher, are there any forms of training that were particularly useful? Conversely, are there any forms of training you wish you had gotten and/or would still like to get? Why?

Considering evolving trends in how research is conducted and evaluated, is there any form of training that would be most beneficial to graduate students and/or scholars more widely?

Is there anything else from your experiences and perspectives as a researcher or on the topic of research more broadly that you think would be helpful to share with me that has not yet been discussed in this conversation?

Notes

1. Wilhelm Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences: An Attempt to Lay a Foundation for the Study of Society and History*, trans. Ramon Batanzos (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988); Anthony Biglan, "The Characteristics of Subject Matter in Different Academic Areas," *Journal of Applied Psychology* 57, 3 (1973): 195–203, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0034701>.
2. Robert Farrell and William Badke, "Situating Information Literacy in the Disciplines: A Practical and Systematic Approach for Academic Librarians," *Reference Services Review* 43, 2 (2015): 319–40, <https://doi.org/10.1108/RSR-11-2014-0052>.
3. Vesa Kautto and Sanna Talja, "Disciplinary Socialization: Learning to Evaluate the Quality of Scholarly Literature," *Advances in Library Administration and Organization* 25 (2007): 55.
4. Farrell and Badke, "Situating Information Literacy in the Disciplines"; Ann Grafstein, "A Discipline-Based Approach to Information Literacy," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 28, 4 (2002): 197–204, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0099-1333\(02\)00283-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0099-1333(02)00283-5); Michelle Holschuh Simmons, "Librarians as Disciplinary Discourse Mediators: Using Genre Theory to Move toward Critical Information Literacy," *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 5, 3 (2005): 297–311, <https://doi.org/10.1353/pla.2005.0041>.
5. Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education," 2016, <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>.

6. Danielle Cooper, Cate Mahoney, Rebecca Springer, Robert Behra, Ian G. Beilin, Guy Burak, Margaret Burri, et al., "Supporting Research in Languages and Literature," Ithaca S+R, 2020, <https://doi.org/10.18665/sr.313810>.
7. Sue Stone, "Humanities Scholars: Information Needs and Uses," *Journal of Documentation* 38, 4 (1982): 292–313; William S. Brockman, Laura Neumann, Carole L. Palmer, and Tonya J. Tidline, "Scholarly Work in the Humanities and the Evolving Information Environment," 2001, <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED459855>; John W. East, "Information Literacy for the Humanities Researcher: A Syllabus Based on Information Habits Research," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 31, 2 (2005): 134–42, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2004.12.006>; Peggy Keeran, "Research in the Humanities," chap. 1 in *Research within the Disciplines*, ed. Peggy Keeran and Michael Levine-Clark, 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2014), 1–34; Carole L. Palmer and Laura J. Neumann, "The Information Work of Interdisciplinary Humanities Scholars: Exploration and Translation," *Library Quarterly* 72, 1 (2002): 85–117, <https://doi.org/10.1086/603337>; Rebecca Watson-Boone, "The Information Needs and Habits of Humanities Scholars," *RQ* 34, 2 (1994): 203–15, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20862645>; Stephen E. Wiberley and William G. Jones, "Patterns of Information Seeking in the Humanities," *College & Research Libraries* 50, 6 (1989): 638–45, https://doi.org/10.5860/crl_50_06_638.
8. Stephen K. Stoa, "Research and Information Retrieval among Academic Researchers: Implications for Library Instruction," *Library Trends* 39, 3 (1991): 238–57.
9. *Ibid.*, 248–49.
10. David Ellis, "Modeling the Information-Seeking Patterns of Academic Researchers: A Grounded Theory Approach," *Library Quarterly* 63, 4 (1993): 469–86, <https://doi.org/10.1086/602622>.
11. Palmer and Neumann, "The Information Work of Interdisciplinary Humanities Scholars."
12. Tony Becher and Paul R. Trowler, *Academic Tribes and Territories: Intellectual Enquiry and the Culture of Disciplines*, 2nd ed. (Buckingham, U.K.: Society for Research into Higher Education, 2001); Colin Evans, *Language People: The Experience of Teaching and Learning Modern Languages in British Universities* (Milton Keynes, U.K.: Open University Press, 1988); Kautto and Talja, "Disciplinary Socialization."
13. Becher and Trowler, *Academic Tribes and Territories*, 188.
14. Evans, *Language People*, 176–73.
15. Kautto and Talja, "Disciplinary Socialization."
16. Clara M. Chu, "Literary Critics at Work and Their Information Needs: A Research-Phases Model," *Library & Information Science Research* 21, 2 (1999): 247–73, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0740-8188\(99\)00002-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0740-8188(99)00002-X).
17. *Ibid.*, 262.
18. Brockman, Neumann, Palmer, and Tidline, "Scholarly Work in the Humanities and the Evolving Information Environment," 29; Ellen Collins and Michael Jubb, "How Do Researchers in the Humanities Use Information Resources?" *LIBER Quarterly* 21, 2 (2012): 176–87, <https://doi.org/10.18352/lq.8017>.
19. Harriet Lönnqvist, "The Research Processes of Humanities Scholars," in *Advances in Library Administration and Organization*, vol. 25, Edward D. Garten, Delmus E. Williams, James M. Nyce, and Sanna Talja, eds. (Bingley, U.K.: Emerald, 2007), 175–202, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0732-0671\(07\)25009-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0732-0671(07)25009-6).
20. Margaret F. Stieg, "The Information Needs of Historians," *College & Research Libraries* 42, 6 (1981): 549–60; Wiberley and Jones, "Patterns of Information Seeking in the Humanities"; Stoa, "Research and Information Retrieval among Academic Researchers."
21. Stoa, "Research and Information Retrieval among Academic Researchers."
22. East, "Information Literacy for the Humanities Researcher"; Jill Newby, "Entering Unfamiliar Territory: Building an Information Literacy Course for Graduate Students in Interdisciplinary Areas," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 50, 3 (2011): 224–29; Keeran, "Research in the Humanities"; Alison Hicks, "Broadening the Landscape: Information

- Literacy in Foreign Language Education," *NECTFL* (Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) *Review* 74 (2014): 35–54.
23. East, "Information Literacy for the Humanities Researcher."
 24. Keeran, "Research in the Humanities."
 25. Newby, "Entering Unfamiliar Territory."
 26. Barbara Blummer, "Providing Library Instruction to Graduate Students: A Review of the Literature," *Public Services Quarterly* 5, 1 (2009): 15–39; Bonnie L. Fong, Minglu Wang, Krista White, and Roberta Tipton, "Assessing and Serving the Workshop Needs of Graduate Students," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 42, 5 (2016): 569–80; Sharon Ince, "Trends in Academic Libraries Graduate Student Services: A Case Study," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 44, 3 (2018): 426–29; Hannah Gascho Rempel, Uta Hussong-Christian, and Margaret Mellinger, "Graduate Student Space and Service Needs: A Recommendation for a Cross-Campus Solution," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 37, 6 (2011): 480–87; Andy Barrett, "The Information-Seeking Habits of Graduate Student Researchers in the Humanities," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 31, 4 (2005): 324–31, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2005.04.005>.
 27. Barrett, "The Information-Seeking Habits of Graduate Student Researchers in the Humanities."
 28. *Ibid.*, 330.
 29. Ted Palys, "Purposive Sampling," in *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Qualitative Research Methods*, ed. Lisa M. Given (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2008), 697–98, <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781412963909.n349>.
 30. Rebecca Green, "Locating Sources in Humanities Scholarship: The Efficacy of Following Bibliographic References," *Library Quarterly* 70, 2 (2000): 221, <https://doi.org/10.1086/630018>.
 31. Stephen E. Wiberley, "Subject Access in the Humanities and the Precision of the Humanist's Vocabulary," *Library Quarterly* 53, 4 (1983): 421–33.
 32. Alexa L. Pearce, "Discovery and the Disciplines: An Inquiry into the Role of Subject Databases through Citation Analysis," *College & Research Libraries* 80, 2 (2019): 195–214, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crl.80.2.195>.
 33. ACRL, "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education."
 34. Ellis, "Modeling the Information-Seeking Patterns of Academic Researchers."
 35. Palmer and Neumann, "The Information Work of Interdisciplinary Humanities Scholars," 103.
 36. Farrell and Badke, "Situating Information Literacy in the Disciplines."
 37. Newby, "Entering Unfamiliar Territory."
 38. Kautto and Talja, "Disciplinary Socialization," 55.
 39. Wiberley and Jones, "Patterns of Information Seeking in the Humanities," 642.
 40. Rebecca Watson-Boone, "The Information Needs and Habits of Humanities Scholars," *RQ* 34, 2 (1994): 213, <https://doi.org/10.2307/20862645>.
 41. Kautto and Talja, "Disciplinary Socialization," 51.
 42. Stephen E. Wiberley, "Habits of Humanists: Scholarly Behavior and New Information Technologies," *Library Hi Tech* 9, 1 (1991): 17–21.
 43. ACRL, "Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education."
 44. Brockman, Neumann, Palmer, and Tidline, "Scholarly Work in the Humanities and the Evolving Information Environment."
 45. Gabriela Castro-Gessner, *Susette Newberry, Deborah Schmidle, and Kornelia Tancheva*, "Humanists in the House of Learning: Academic Research Libraries' Role in Fostering Communities of Practice," in *Imagine, Innovate, Inspire: The Proceedings of the ACRL 2013 Conference*, ed. Dawn M. Mueller (Chicago: ACRL, 2013), 281–88.
 46. Erin R. B. Eldermire, Erica M. Johns, Susette Newberry, and Virginia A. Cole, "Repackaging Library Workshops into Disciplinary Bootcamps: Creating Graduate Student Success," *College & Research Libraries News* 80, 7 (2019): 394–98, <https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.80.7.394>;



- Bonnie L. Fong, "Boot Camps for Graduate Student Success: A Collaborative Initiative," *Journal of Library Administration* 59, 4 (2019): 373–94, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01930826.2019.1593710>; Benjamin R. Harris, "Communities as Necessity in Information Literacy Development: Challenging the Standards," *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 34, 3 (2008): 248–55, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.acalib.2008.03.008>; Colleen S. Harris, "The Case for Partnering Doctoral Students with Librarians: A Synthesis of the Literatures," *Library Review* 60, 7 (2011): 599–620, <https://doi.org/10.1108/00242531111153614>.
47. Joseph Bizup, "BEAM [background, exhibit, argument, method]: A Rhetorical Vocabulary for Teaching Research-Based Writing," *Rhetoric Review* 27, 1 (2008): 72–86, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07350190701738858>.

This mss. is peer reviewed, copy edited, and accepted for publication, portal 21.2.

This mss. is peer reviewed, copy edited, and accepted for publication, portal 21.2.