Another energizing LOEX Conference has come and gone. LOEX’s first foray out to California was a big success, thanks in no small part to all the efforts of SCIL, the LOEX 2007 planning committee, and assorted volunteers. Of course, it’s never a bad thing to have your conference in beautiful San Diego right next to the ocean bay!

The biggest reason, though, for the success of the conference was once again our presenters and our attendees. The interesting ideas that were presented and discussed were truly remarkable and often innovative. In reading the reviews of the sessions after the conference, I frequently read comments such as “Very creative, this sparked some ideas” or “Just what I needed - we can do this at our library.” Hopefully, as attendees go back to their libraries and implement their version of what they learned at the conference, they will create their own innovations that will be shared at a future conference.

Until the conference proceedings are printed at the end of 2007, you can get a taste of what was presented at http://www.csusm.edu/acarr/materials/

In the meantime, we’ll continue sharing ideas about topics such as expertise, custom search engines, and mission statements in this month’s Quarterly.

Have a great summer,
Brad Sietz
Director

- What’s Inside -

Book Review: 2
How to Lie with Maps
Tracey Hughes
t2hughes@library.ucsd.edu

Instructional Design with Expertise in Mind (Part 2) 4
Eric Frierson
efrierson@umich.edu

TechMatters: 6
Search and Search-ability: Google Custom Search & Library Instruction
Krista Graham
krista.graham@cmich.edu

Mission Statement vs. Guiding Principles 8
Randall Schroeder
randall.schroeder@wartburg.edu

Ross’ Rave: 11
Get ‘er done!
Ross LaBaugh
rossl@csufresno.edu

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**Book Review:** *How to Lie with Maps (2nd Edition)*. By Mark Monmonier
(University of Chicago Press, 1996)

Tracey Hughes, University of California San Diego

**Identify, locate, evaluate, apply, integrity, authenticity.** Recognized as fundamental tenets of information literacy, they are as utterly relevant to maps and geographic information as they are to information contained in a book, journal, video, website, or database. Mark Monmonier’s 1991 classic, released in a second edition in 1996, *How to Lie with Maps*, offers insights into this important realm of information literacy in a concise and engaging manner.

Don’t let the publication date of the book put you off; its guidance on unraveling the mystique of maps is as applicable today as it was then, serving as a welcome reminder that underlying fundamentals do not change even as technologies surrounding them might change dramatically.

**Creating and Distorting Reality**

Monmonier paints a clear picture of the fundamental tools and techniques used by mapmakers to portray reality through maps and geographic information. The book begins with a humorous and wry overview of how and why maps paint a “selective and incomplete view of reality”, focusing on the role of the map author’s vast “cartographic license” regarding the selection and depiction of information. This distortion of reality, how it is created, and clues to decipher the motivations behind the distortion are truly the key points of the book.

Distortion is a necessity on a map for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the obvious “cartographic paradox” of a map attempting to mimic the real world. A transformation from the 3-D world to a 2-D map means that information is only selectively conveyed, i.e. not every detail of the real world can actually be shown on the map, and the symbols used to represent reality on the map are rarely of the same scale as the actual objects in our world.

Beginning by offering substantive detail on basic map elements of scale and projection, Monmonier then moves on to discuss the details on how a map’s symbols, color and data classification impact reality. The conclusion of the book briefly touches on newer electronic mapping technologies and cleanly ties together Monmonier’s analysis of the power of maps and how an educated map reader might approach this particular medium of information.

**Integration into Information Literacy / Library Instruction**

A distinguished geography professor at Syracuse University since 1973, Monmonier writes as an educator and the book lends itself well to an instructional environment. He explicitly states in the introduction that he cannot remind his students enough that “a single map is but one of an indefinitely large number of maps that might have been produced for the same situation or from the same data.” This statement about cartographic license applies equally well to many other information resources and could be integrated into any discussion of information literacy. Monmonier provides a quick example of cartographic license using the infamous airline route map seen today in airline magazines (think hubs and curved lines from city to city). From a marketing perspective, the airline’s breadth of geographic coverage looks impressive with comprehensive service offerings. From a passenger perspective, this map might be misleading since it does not at all illustrate frequency of service or directness of a flight path. It is this type of critical map reading skill we can pass on to our patrons.

Several basic principles of human cognition and human computer interaction (HCI) come to bear in information literacy. Not unsurprisingly, these same principles are also extremely relevant with map analysis. Color, (dis)placement, size of font and symbols, orientation, and text labels are just a few that readily come to mind. All of these factors form the basics of introductory spatial literacy instruction, as they skew the map reader’s perceptions of authenticity and validity of geographic information. To illustrate this concept, Monmonier discusses the particularly close relationship between symbology and cognition in the coloration of weather maps. Red typically indicates hot weather and blue cold; however, if
these colors were switched, the ‘readability’ of that weather map becomes dramatically different. The cognitive load on the reader (i.e., how much the reader has to actively think) increases significantly and the validity of the weather station might be called into question.

Another important point to take away from *How to Lie with Maps* is the notion that any given map will likely serve multiple roles, and those roles may be in conflict. A serious example of a single map for multiple purposes might be one map used to illustrate the turbulent situation in the Middle East. Say that two news media sources, a newspaper website and a television news station, use this same map in their respective stories. When broadcasted on the television, it is shown for only an instant and the colors of the map may appear distorted based on the viewer’s television set. A news anchor could selectively highlight an area on the map but neglect to mention another. The map on the web might come through in only black and white, or might be pixilated/reduced in size so that only some of the information is legible. Maps can incite much emotion and strife by the shifting of a line on a map or the shading of a particular land area to represent a culture’s religious belief. Without a critical assessment of the map and presentation of it in such a way that the user can actually ‘read’ it, the map becomes essentially eye candy to sell a particular situation or perspective.

Monmonier’s discussion of reality distortion also applies to how we view ourselves and our institutions as places of learning. Our own perspectives of ‘reality’ may prove to have as much distortion as the frequently used Mercator map projection where Greenland has as large a land area as South America, when in actuality it is 1/8th the size (take a quick look at Google Maps to see the distortion from the Mercator projection). Certainly our perspectives lead us to choose which tools we use for instruction and how we present them, and we make these choices every time we plan an instructional session...what databases to show, is this search strategy too complex, what topics will be interesting to the class. Perhaps some of the insights of this book can help us take a fresh look at our own choices and selection of what we present to our respective audiences.

With an appendix for a quick review of basic world geography (remember the specifics of latitude and longitude?), Monmonier provides a solid introduction to cartography with substantive technical detail but not so much as to overwhelm. At 175 pages, the book is a quick read with short chapters packed with valuable information. With an ever-increasing amount of information presented in maps and there not always being a Map or GIS librarian available, we should increase our ability to critically evaluate maps and geographic information. Maps, like pictures, convey tremendous amounts of information quickly and powerfully. The more we understand the choices behind map products and geographic information, the better we are able to teach others to communicate their positions effectively and accurately. *How to Lie with Maps* uses style and humor to help the “cartographically illiterate” and is truly a worthwhile read for those teaching across all subject areas and venues.
Instructional Design with Expertise in Mind (Part 2)
Eric Frierson, University of Michigan

Quick – can you remember all three principles discussed in Part 1 of this two-part article? Unless you’ve gone over the article many times and put those concepts into practice over and over again, you likely need a little reminder.

- **Principle 1**: Experts notice features and meaningful patterns of information that are not noticed by novices.
- **Principle 2**: Experts have acquired a great deal of content knowledge that is organized in ways that reflect a deep understanding of their subject matter.
- **Principle 3**: Experts’ knowledge cannot be reduced to sets of isolated facts or propositions but, instead, reflects contexts of applicability: that is, the knowledge is ‘conditionalized’ on a set of circumstances.

These three principles from “How People Learn” are accompanied by three more, described below with some examples of how to use them in practice.

**Principle 4**
“Experts are able to flexibly retrieve important aspects of their knowledge with little attentional effort” (Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning, Commission on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, & National Research Council, 1999, p. 31).

Experts have “knowledge fluency”, a seemingly “automatic” recall of knowledge (Schneider & Shiffrin, 1977). For expert information seekers, finding information comes ‘naturally’ – it doesn’t take a lot of effort to recall appropriate strategies. Because of this, experts are free to think about other things (Anderson, 1981, 1982; LaBerge & Samuels, 1974; Lesgold et al., 1988; Schneider & Shiffrin, 1985).

Novice researchers spend working memory recalling specific strategies and concepts. While novices try to remember how to use OR and AND appropriately for combining search terms, expert searchers focus attention on generating more words for the search – recalling the mechanics of Boolean operators happens very quickly and without attention.

**Principle in practice**
What does this mean for instructional design? Instructors must pay attention to their own expertise and recognize that novices do not move through databases as effortlessly as experts do.

Library catalogs are often a part of library instruction. Librarians who have spent countless hours using the catalog can be quite savvy with it, perhaps without even realizing their own expertise. It is difficult to recognize expertise in oneself (Committee on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, Committee on Techniques for the Enhancement of Human Performance, & National Research Council, 1991) because performing actions is implicit.

Good instruction ensures that these implicit actions are made explicit. This example illustrates one strategy to accomplish this:

When the librarian teaches a class, she counteracts her urge to click through the catalog quickly by stepping away from the computer before each click. For example, when she describes the quickest way to search for a book using its title, she pulls down a dropdown menu and moves her cursor on top of the “Title begins with…” option, but before actually clicking to select it, she steps away from the computer and to the projection screen, pointing with her finger to the menu. While it may seem perfectly natural to her to select this option, she realizes that students may not know where this option is, or why it is most effective. By highlighting the search option, “Title begins with…” and then moving away, she has the opportunity to explain why she chose it and gives students time to see where that option is.

Had she pulled down the menu and clicked on the option she wanted, she might have sped through a screen students needed more time to understand. By physically moving away from the computer and the mouse, she created a pause that counteracted her own implicit actions in the catalog that result from her expertise.

Librarians can also force themselves to slow down in the planning process. When writing a script or lesson plan, they can write down each individual step in the exercises they do with the class. This task makes explicit each step in the process, and gives the librarian an opportunity to reflect on the “why” of each step as well.

**Principle 5**
“Though experts know their disciplines thoroughly, this does not guarantee that they are able to teac-
ers” (Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning et al., 1999, p. 31).

There is a saying, “Those who can, do; those who can’t, teach.” While this saying has its flaws (e.g., it might be unfairly used to denigrate teachers), it is actually insightful into the limitation of content experts. Being an expert searcher does not make one an expert teacher of searching and as we saw with Principle 4, can sometimes make it harder. The ability to stand in front of a class and engage students is also a skill to master.

Pedagogical knowledge, like any other content knowledge, is conditionalized (Schulman, 1986, 1987). Teaching strategies for information literacy could be different than strategies for teaching in other fields. In other words, those strategies that are especially effective for teaching mathematics may not be as effective when teaching the searching of databases. Instructors with expertise in teaching information literacy best serve library instruction.

**Principle in practice**

Librarians versed in pedagogy can design library sessions that help students achieve information literacy.

When teaching students how to find peer-reviewed articles on the library’s website, a librarian passes around physical copies of journals they might use in their papers, including both popular publications like TIME and Newsweek as well as peer-reviewed titles. He asks them to look through the journals materials for a minute or two and find information about the authors and the editors of these pieces. He then asks them to report back on the differences in the two types of publications.

An expert in information literacy would know what makes peer-reviewed titles different from popular titles. However, this instructor, knowledgeable about pedagogy, avoided simply telling students the differences. He realizes that when students construct their own explanations and reasoning, they learn better.

**Principle 6**

“Experts have varying levels of flexibility in their approach to new situations” (Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning et al., 1999, p. 31).

ACRL’s Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education include the ability to recognize when there is an information need. Kuhlthau’s (2003) model of the information seeking process begins with this step as well. Additionally, in their final principle, the authors of “How People Learn” echo this competency: “The ability to recognize the limits of one's current knowledge, then take steps to remedy the situation, is extremely important for learners at all ages” (Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning et al., 1999, p. 47).

An expert may not know everything there is to know about their expertise, but they realize their own deficiencies and address them. Instructors in library sessions must help students recognize when they need additional instruction or help and make those learning resources available to them. A casual mention of reference desks and reference e-mail and chat services may not be enough; like other knowledge, it must be conditionalized. Letting students know that it is common to feel stuck and that there are places to go for help is important in developing students that seek out assistance when they need it.

In addition, we must find ways to help students understand the big ideas that will help them adapt the knowledge they gain to situations they have not encountered. Miller (1978) describes two types of experts: artisans and virtuosos. While artisans are capable of recalling strategies and solving problems in specific situations, virtuosos can “exhibit their positive characteristics despite their training” (Miller, 1978 in Committee on Developments in the Science of Learning et al., 1999, p. 46). Context is important in recalling and using knowledge; however, experts do not rely on being in that context in order to apply knowledge.

This is particularly true with library resources. Because databases differ in their capabilities and features, effective library users demonstrate characteristics of virtuosos. An artisan might be an expert searcher in only one particular database, for example, knowing where to click and how to use its controlled vocabulary, but a virtuoso can apply searching skills across a variety of databases, regardless of the database they use.

**Principle in practice**

While one or two fifty-minute sessions of library instruction cannot make virtuosos out of novices, we can try to teach some of the characteristics of virtuosos to make our students more flexible in a library environment.

*(Instructional Design...Continued on page 10)*
Once you have an account, you may begin the process of creating your custom search tool. To get started, you will need to provide a name for your new search tool, a brief description of the type of information that will be indexed, and a list of keywords that describe the content of your search engine. You will then be asked to provide a list of web sites you wish to include in your search tool. You may include as many or as few as you wish, with the option to add more in the future. You will also be asked to specify whether you wish your search tool to search only these sites, or to search the entire web but to give preference to results from your selected sites. Complete the process by testing your new tool using the “Preview” search box, then agree to the terms of service and the process is complete!

Further Customizations

Once you have created a new search tool, you will have access to an administrative control panel that will allow you to further modify and customize your search engine.

Collaboration

Collaboration is a feature that gives you the option of allowing others to help you identify appropriate sites for your search tool. You may either choose to invite specific individuals to contribute, or you may opt to allow individuals to volunteer to offer assistance. If you decide to allow volunteers, you will still have the option of accepting or rejecting any individual’s offer of assistance. Once accepted, contributors may add, exclude, or annotate sites in your search tool in an effort to improve your search tool.

Refinements

The refinements feature allows you to annotate your selected sites with labels that will allow users to refine search results. The labels that you create will appear as a list of links above the search results (Figure 1). When a user clicks on a link, the sites that have been labeled with these refinements are given priority in the search results.
Google recommends creating labels that complement the existing search algorithms by providing information about the site that is difficult to capture using normal search terms. Suggestions include labels that identify audience (i.e. “for_students”, “for_patients”), source type (i.e. university, government), document type (i.e. maps, biographies), and even subject.

Look & Feel

Google allows considerable latitude to creators regarding the look and feel of a custom search tool. A logo may be added and the colors on the results page can be customized to match the look & feel of your local web site. In addition, both the search box and search result screen may be embedded within your own local site by pasting some code snippets provided by Google.

Custom Search as an Instructional Tool

As previously mentioned, I am of the opinion that Google Custom Search has potential as a valuable instructional tool for teaching a variety of information literacy concepts.

The value of subject specific search tools

The most obvious and straightforward instructional use for this tool is to allow an instruction librarian to easily and quickly create a specialized search engine for a specific bibliographic instruction session. A custom search tool could be developed to support a specific research assignment or perhaps just the broader course subject area (i.e. American history). Such a tool could be placed on a course web site, or even embedded within a class shell within a course management system for students in the class to access. An assignment might ask students to compare and assess the quality of the results that they retrieve using a search tool customized to search only reliable web sites within their area of study and a comparable search of the open web.

Evaluating web sources

If you wanted to take the concept one step further, and incorporate a collaborative component into your instructional approach, you might invite students in the class to participate as contributors, working together to improve the course search tool. After meeting with the students to introduce them to the concept of web site evaluation and to teach them how to judge the relevance and reliability of such sites, they might then be required to add a certain number of web sites to the custom search tool that meet the evaluative criteria discussed during the instructional session. Not only would this project teach students the importance of evaluating the information that they use for research purposes, but it would also result in the creation of a more robust and useful research tool for their class.

Using a controlled vocabulary to improve search results

If you have the luxury of teaching a for-credit information literacy course, you might increase your expectations for the project even further and require students to develop appropriate search refinements and labels for their custom search engine. By working together to develop an agreed upon set of appropriate and useful search labels, students might begin to understand both the challenges of developing such a system as well as the advantages and added value that a well-designed human-mediated indexing system can provide to a searcher.

These are just a sampling of possible ideas for instructional uses for this technology. Now that you are aware of Google Custom Search, and know how easy it is to create a customized search engine, I have no doubt that you will be able to think of many more instructional uses for this new tool.
The college mission statement is held in unusual high regard by administration, students, and faculty. One will find it posted in classrooms, administration buildings, printed material, and even the packaging material to official “Wartburg College Water” bottles and “Trail Mix” wraps. Intentionally and unintentionally the college mission statement has provided guiding principles for major decisions at the college. When it became time for a “Vogel Library Mission Statement,” it seemed elegant to the authors to write a library mission statement that would refer back to the college mission statement. It logically followed that the ILAC mission statement should also refer back to the college and library mission statements.

It should be noted that the ILAC mission statement clearly states its goals and foundational theory in the opening paragraph:

Vogel Library’s mission is to educate information-literate lifelong learners. Our information literacy program is the flagship of that effort, but other library operations also contribute toward this goal. The information literacy program is designed to embody leadership and visibility in promoting the library’s mission of educating students. As such, our information literacy mission closely reflects that of the Library. We embrace the national Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education: (http://www.acrl.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/informationliteracycompetency.htm) and that document’s definition of information literacy: “…a set of abilities requiring individuals to ‘recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.’”

The points make it clear to the reader what ILAC is at Wartburg and how its goals and objectives are accomplished. The statement refers back to the Vogel Library mission statement, which also refers back to the college’s mission statement.

An effective mission statement as outlined by Kross reflects the unique culture of the library and of the parent institution, addressing their purposes, values and beliefs. The benefit is that an effective mission statement becomes the guiding principles by which one can manage. This year, for instance, student life administrators at Wartburg College are creating an extended orientation week for first-year students that will include some academic work. An early draft had a “library session” placed
on Saturday with no further explanation other than that the administrators needed something for the students to do at that time. The librarians referred all concerned to the ILAC mission statement, “We believe course-integrated instruction connected with a real academic need is more effective than stand-alone information literacy courses or disconnected tours and library orientations.” The academic dean agreed and the library was dropped as part of the Saturday program. This is not to say the librarians were unwilling to be part of the Saturday program, but, in light of the guiding principles, it had to be “connected with a real need.” The orientation team was not forthcoming with the real need. Thus, the library will not be involved until that need is articulated. This transaction reflected the values of the college, the library, and the ILAC program.

Kross also indicates that a mission statement should be believable, achievable, and honest. The librarians and staff involved at the Vogel Library believed in the guiding principles that led to the mission statement. The team approach to writing the mission statement based on guiding principles proved effective with very little disagreement. It was to Wartburg’s advantage that the ILAC team is small, three librarians at the time the mission statement was written. Two of the librarians had previously operated under the guiding principles that would eventually be listed in the bullets for seven years but had not written them down. The guiding principles were firmly imprinted into the ILAC program’s culture. The mission statement is achievable and honest. It reflects what the ILAC program is, not what is wished it was.

As Alan Aldrich pointed out in his presentation at the 2007 ACRL Conference in Baltimore, mission statements can be long or short. Some writers feel a need to go into great detail outlining the many functions of a library or a department. This has the advantage of covering all bases. Other missions statements go for what Barbara Doyle-Wilch, Dean of Library and Information Services at Middlebury College, called the “Star Trek” approach: short and memorable just like the opening sequence to the original Star Trek television series - “its five year mission - to explore strange new worlds... to boldly go where no man has gone before” (B. Doyle-Wilch, personal communication). If the mission statement is short and memorable, just like the college’s mission statement at Wartburg, it is easier for stakeholders to keep it at the forefront of decision-making. It has been Wartburg’s experience that either approach is defensible as long as several fundamental issues remain at the core of the writing process.

A useful tool to identify what is fundamental and unique about an organization is to have the stakeholders address a few simple questions. Doyle–Wilch used a worksheet with three basic questions to identify what made her library unique at that time:

- who are we?
- what do we do?
- what is our style of operation?

Answering these questions will help an organization get and its core beliefs and reflect its guiding principles if that had been done in the past. The organization then will have to answer if the guiding principles are observable for assessment. In other words, can the organization prove that it is doing what it claims to be doing? Assessment then can be done for the best reason: to learn things and not merely, again, to satisfy an outside audience. This allows a library or library department to close the loop. An organization creates guiding principles that reflect its value and unique contribution to the parent organization. Those principles are assessed for validity. From those the steps flow the mission statement which should be as natural and easy as a downhill stream.

References

Appendix: Wartburg Mission Statements

Information Literacy Across the Curriculum Mission Statement
Vogel Library’s mission is to educate information-literate lifelong learners. Our information literacy program is the flagship of that effort, but other library operations also contribute toward this goal. The information literacy program is designed to embody leadership and visibility in promoting the library’s mission of educating students. As such, our information literacy mission closely reflects that of the Library. We embrace the national Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education and that document’s definition of information literacy: “…a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.”

(Mission Statement...Continued on page 12)
A librarian demonstrates the use of controlled vocabulary in a database. Rather than simply conducting a canned search, she takes the time to explain the big ideas behind controlled vocabulary. In addition, she questions the class on why controlled vocabulary is important, and when it can be useful. She allows the students to research their topics, and has them share the controlled vocabulary terms that best fit their topics.

Then, in a database with a different interface, before diving in to how to use the database’s tools, she prepares the class to think about controlled vocabulary again. She asks students to suggest search terms, and upon getting results, to identify controlled vocabulary terms in the records they examine. Many students point out the “Descriptors” field and suggest that those may be controlled vocabulary terms.

Finally, she takes them to a database without controlled vocabulary. When they search in this database, students realize that there is no “descriptor” field. She asks them what words should be used. A student suggests using the terms they found in other controlled vocabularies in the other databases. The librarian agrees, and also suggests that in addition to those, brainstorming other words that might be used, tying in Boolean searching.

In this scenario, despite searching in databases with different content and different controlled vocabularies, the librarian is preparing them to develop flexibility with the concepts they learn. She does so by stepping back from a new database and asking her students to explicitly think about controlled vocabulary and its utility. She separates the concept of controlled vocabulary from a particular database, but reinforces the notion that controlled vocabulary is used in certain situations that students can recognize. These questions guide students into making connections between problems and solutions, not between interfaces and tasks.

Instructional Design with the Novice in Mind

Instructors cannot expect to make experts out of novices. The time constraints of course-integrated instruction provide a difficult challenge for library instruction. Instructors are also limited by little or no continuity with students (Jacobson & Xu, 2004). However, despite these circumstances, effective library instructors can use knowledge of the nature of expertise to plan lessons that have a lasting effect on students.

References


Once inside, and throughout lunch, (By the way, do not ever ask Jimmy Bob if the fries are cooked in trans fats) my formerly sophisticated, worldly, and articulate husband of my daughter spoke in a language and dialect I had never heard. “Why are you talking like that?” I asked. “When in Rome,” he replied.

I’m not unfamiliar with code shifting. We do this all the time at the reference desk and in classrooms. We talk about monographs, not books; or serials, when we mean journals, periodicals, or magazines. I suppose, it’s all part of the lexicon of the university. Part of our task is inculcating in the tender, virgin minds of our students, the proper way to speak to the university, the library, and to us. There is a whole academic vocabulary which has little, or different meaning off campus. My neighbor works at Target. “Citation” to him means a speeding ticket. An “outline” is a shadow. “Minor” is someone you shouldn’t date. In the “academy” however, we expect students to code shift. They need to adjust the way they talk to match our environment. If they don’t, they’ll be as easy to spot as a goat in a flock of sheep.

But, code shifting is more than linguistic. It’s cultural. When I have a meeting with the Vice President of Academic Affairs, I expect her to be wearing a well-tailored suit, stylishly sensible shoes, and understated accessories. I’ll be similarly decked out (minus the accessories, perhaps), so at least on the surface, we’re on the same level. On the one hand, I show my respect for her and her position by dressing and behaving in a certain way. On the other hand, I’m doing this for my own interests. My guess is she will take my proposition (and me) a bit more seriously if I’m in uniform.

The classroom is a whole different story. Last semester, a TA for the Communications Department brought in 25 students keen on finding information on various topics for their persuasive presentations. The usual litany: national healthcare, global warming, immigration reform, same sex marriage. As they rambled in, I was struck by the diversity of this group. There were Mexican-Americans, first generation students, native English speakers, married men, soldiers, heterosexuals, chemistry majors, Hmong, mothers, part-time students, athletes, HIV positive women, parolees and honor students. They were rich and poor, religious, tired, depressed, silly and
serious. Some wore designer knock-offs, scrubs from work, spike heels, and bedroom slippers. Twenty-five individuals brought together, artificially, to my classroom at this time completely against their will, but allegedly, for some inherent good. For the next fifty minutes I needed to talk to them in a language common to them all. Sacre bleu!

The play goes on. I do my shtick. Blab, blah, demo, your turn, blab, demo, your turn, blab, blah, demo, your turn, blab, blah, bye. It’s like a tap lesson. I notice, as I walk about interacting with the groups, several students ask me how to find a journal.

“It’s easy, “I say. “Remember, I showed you how to blab, blab, blab.’”

“Yeah, but our teacher said we can only use journals, otherwise we get docked 10 points for the speech.”

“Well, what she means is, you need to use articles that are in journals,” I say. “So, tonight, when you are working on this from home, go online, click to one of the databases, like I showed you this morning, type in the keywords for your topic, and you’ll get a list of articles in journals, magazines, newspaper, periodicals. All kinds of sources.”

“Can’t you just show us how to get to the journals on immigration?” one student asks.

“Besides,” another one says, “the teacher says we can’t use the internet.”

As the say in Texas - Don’t worry 'bout the mule son, just load the wagon