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Scholarly Communications and Open Access: An Introduction for Upper-level Undergraduates

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Description, Abstract, or Artist's Statement

This one-shot library instruction session is designed for upper-level undergraduates and can be applied to courses in a variety of disciplines. It is especially relevant for courses with a social justice component or where students are hoping to publish their work. The particular course at the University of San Diego (USD) in which this lesson was situated was an upper-level Ethnic Studies course: "Native American Indigenous Activism."

Keywords

open access, scholarly communications, undergraduates

Disciplines

Library and Information Science | Scholarly Communication | Scholarly Publishing

Notes

Book is available for purchase at the ALA store: <https://www.alastore.ala.org/content/scholarly-communications-cookbook>

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The Scholarly Communications Cookbook

edited by Brianna Buljung and Emily Bongiovanni

Association of College and Research Libraries

A division of the American Library Association

Chicago • 2021

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2021948194

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Scholarly Communications and Open Access:

An Introduction for Upper-level Undergraduates

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NUTRITION INFORMATION

This one-shot library instruction session is designed for upper-level undergraduates and can be applied to courses in a variety of disciplines. It is especially relevant for courses with a social justice component or where students are hoping to publish their work. The particular course at the University of San Diego (USD) in which this lesson was situated was an upper-level Ethnic Studies course: “Native American Indigenous Activism.”

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Diagram the process by which academic, peer-reviewed research/scholarship is produced, distributed, and consumed in order to visualize the complex machinery of scholarly communications.
- Distinguish between traditional models of publishing and the open access movement in order to articulate the advantages and complications of each and to articulate the value of open access.
- Follow bibliographic citations to locate the full text of articles with different levels of “openness” in order to identify the impact on accessibility for readers.
- Analyze two examples of copyright transfer agreements in order to illuminate the process of negotiation between authors and publishers.

NUMBER SERVED

The activities in this lesson work best with small class sizes of 20 students or fewer but can be adapted to larger groups.

COOKING TIME

Plan on roughly 2 hours of preparation time to communicate with the faculty instructor and assemble the activities and in-class materials. You might also wish to prepare an evaluation or assessment form for the students to complete at the conclusion of the session.

This session requires roughly 2 hours if presented in its entirety. If less time is available, individual components can be selected for presentation.

DIETARY GUIDELINES

This session targets the following frames in the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*:

- Information Has Value. This frame is at the forefront of the entire instruction session, as it addresses open access, copyright, publishing practices, intellectual property, commodification of information, social justice, systemic change, and information privilege.
- Information Creation as a Process. This lesson speaks to several knowledge

practices and dispositions in this frame, such as “monitor the value that is placed upon different types of information products in varying contexts” and “understand that different methods of information dissemination with different purposes are available for their use.”

- Scholarship as Conversation. This lesson emphasizes the ongoing nature of scholarship, research, and discovery, and seeks to engage students not only as knowledge consumers but also contributors. As part of the course at USD in which this lesson was situated, students created Wikipedia pages to center marginalized, indigenous knowledges and to provide an avenue for academia to address knowledge/epistemological inequity in partnership with communities.

INGREDIENTS & EQUIPMENT

If possible, each student should have access to a laptop or desktop computer with internet access. The librarian can demo activities on a computer connected to a large screen so students can follow along.

Prior to the session, prepare copies of the following resources:

- The “Flow of Knowledge” exercise (figure 1) asks students to work in groups

Figure 1. “Flow of Knowledge” Exercise

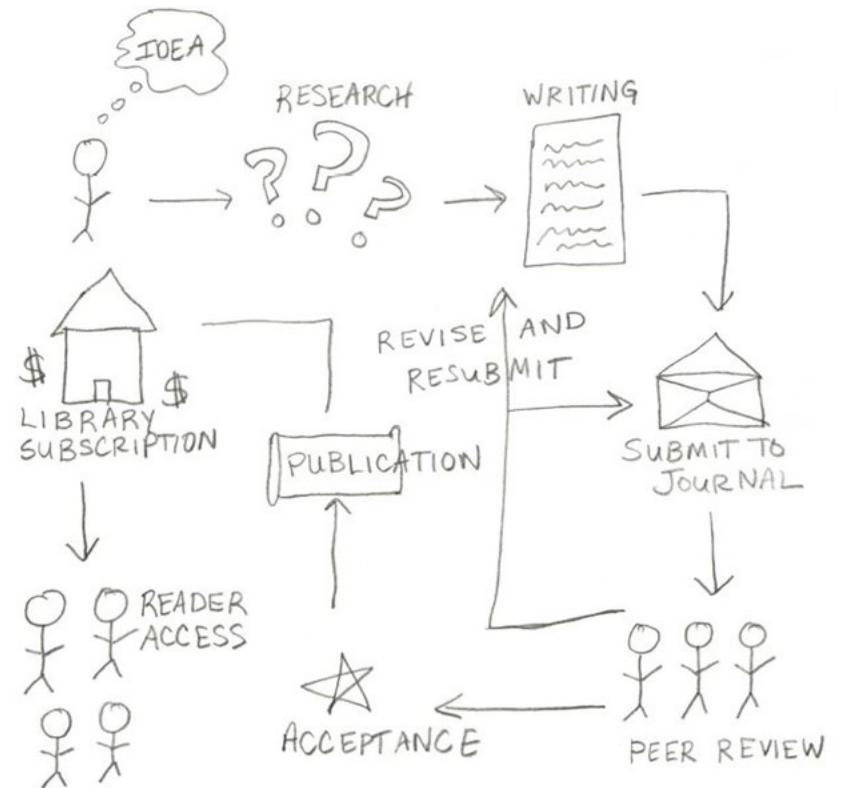
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Directions: Find a partner or two. Together, map the process by which academic, peer-reviewed research/scholarship is produced, distributed, and consumed. Start at its inception and trace it all the way to the point where it reaches its readers. Include all the people/parties involved (you can use stick figures!) and indicate any points at which money is involved by using a dollar sign (\$).

“Flow of Knowledge” Exercise filled

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Here is one possibility of what a student’s drawing might look like. Others might be simpler or more complex, with additional options included (e.g., Google searches to discover the article, submission to a second journal if the initial attempt is declined, authors paying APCs to make their work openly available, etc.) depending on familiarity with the scholarly publishing system.



of 2–3 to map the process showing how academic, peer-reviewed scholarship is produced, distributed, and consumed, starting at its inception and tracing it all the way to the point where it reaches its readers. Ask students to include all the people or groups involved and indicate all points at which money is involved by using a dollar sign.

- The “Open Access in Action” exercise (figure 2) is simply a document with three citations. Ask the students to locate the full text of each article and write down what they had to do to retrieve each one. One citation should be freely available, perhaps through the institutional repository, if you want to introduce it; one should be available through a library subscription database; and one should require interlibrary loan.
- Two sample Copyright Transfer Agreements to introduce students to the process by which authors typically sign journal contracts for article publication
- Copies of any pre-readings that you or the professor assigned in advance of this session (optional)
- Copies of an evaluation form if you want to solicit feedback about the session from the students (optional)

PREPARATION

Work closely with the professor, if possible, to tailor this session to the context of the course. For example, for the “Open Access in

Action” exercise that asks students to locate the full text of three citations, choose citations that reflect the subject matter of the course. Consider asking the professor if they have retained a copyright transfer agreement that they signed with a publisher and if they would like to use it as one of the examples.

Think about how you will encourage active participation and discussion among the students. By asking students to work first in small groups and then report back to the larger group, they may feel more confident and engage more readily. Ask open-ended questions to foster discussion and curiosity.

COOKING METHOD

Here is a proposed outline for the session, with time allotments for each component:

1. Introduction to Scholarly Communications: “Flow of Knowledge” Exercise and Discussion (30 minutes)
 - a. Introduce yourself and distribute the “Flow of Knowledge” exercise, which asks students to work in small groups to draw the process of how academic, peer-reviewed scholarship is produced, distributed, and consumed, starting at its inception and tracing it all the way to the point where it reaches its readers. Ask students to

(Note: The citations in the exercise below should be adapted based on your library’s resources. One citation should be freely available—perhaps through the institutional repository, if you want to introduce it; one should be available through a library subscription database; and one should require the use of interlibrary loan (ILL). The students do not actually need to order through ILL but should be aware that they would need to use it to obtain the full-text of the third citation.)

“Open Access in Action” Exercise

Directions: Using the citations below, write down everything you would need to do to retrieve the full text of each article, and be prepared to share your steps with the class.

Harper, A. B. (2010). Race as a ‘feeble matter’ in veganism: Interrogating whiteness, geopolitical privilege, and consumption philosophy of cruelty-free products. *Journal of Critical Animal Studies* VIII(3), 5–27.

Barker, A. J. (2015). ‘A direct act of resurgence, a direct act of sovereignty’: Reflections on idle no more, indigenous activism, and Canadian settler colonialism. *Globalizations* 12(1), 43–65.

Kocken, G. J., & Wical, S. (2013). “I’ve never heard of it before”: Awareness of open access at a small liberal arts university. *Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian* 32(3), 140–154.

Figure 2. “Open Access in Action” Exercise

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- include all the people and groups involved and indicate all points at which money is involved by using a dollar sign.
- b. Each group will show and explain their drawing on the whiteboard. Together as a class, compile the drawings into one model that represents the class's best understanding of the scholarly publishing system.
2. Introducing Open Access: Video and Discussion (30 minutes)
 - a. View the "Open Access Explained!" video cartoon by PhD Comics.
 - b. Discuss reactions to the video and to the pre-class readings (if you assigned any). Ask if the students had heard about open access before, or was this the first time? What stood out to them? Shocked or surprised them? Angered them? Delighted them? What was confusing? What do they want to know more about?
 - c. Return to the drawing the class created earlier. How does open access disrupt or change the traditional process of knowledge creation, distribution, and consumption? How does it introduce notions of social justice and activism? What would the drawing look like if all scholarship was made available open access?
 3. What Does Open Access Mean for Readers? (20 minutes)
 - a. Distribute the "Open Access in Action" exercise with three citations. Ask the students to write down everything they would need to do in order to retrieve the full text of each article.
 - b. Reconvene and ask the students how easily they were able to retrieve the articles. What obstacles did they encounter? How did their status as university students affect this process? Have they ever found a "perfect" article, only to be prompted to pay for access to it? In that case, what did they do?
 4. What Does Open Access Mean for Authors? (20 minutes)
 - a. Introduce the process by which authors typically sign journal contracts for article publication.
 - b. Share two examples of copyright transfer agreements and ask students to describe what they see on each. What do the terms of these contracts mean for the authors? Would they feel comfortable signing an agreement like this if they wrote an article? How are the contracts similar and different?
 5. What Does Open Access Mean for Me? Wrap-Up and Evaluation (20 minutes)
 - a. Ask students to reflect: What is one thing that you might do differently as a result of what you learned today?
 - b. Recommend open access resources the students can begin using right away to aid them in conducting and/or publishing their research, such as
 - open access and scholarly communications guides the library has created;
 - the institutional repository;
 - library databases, such as Cabell's Directories of Publishing Opportunities; and
 - external tools, such as Unpaywall, Open Access Button, the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), etc.
 - a. Provide contact information for follow-up questions and encourage them to reach out for further assistance.
 - b. Distribute an evaluation form to gather students' feedback on the session (optional).

CHEF'S NOTES

This session is designed as a one-shot instruction session but could also be broken up into smaller segments and delivered over multiple class visits. Likewise, if the professor can only offer you 20–30 minutes of class time, choose one of the activities and focus on that.

One of the key ingredients in this session is reflection. At each stage, prompt students to reflect on questions like how open access (or lack of it) currently affects them as a student and what it will mean for them once they have graduated. At the conclusion of class, ask, What is one thing that you might do differently as a result of what you learned today?

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Piled Higher and Deeper (PHD Comics). (2012, October 25). Open access explained! [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5rVH1KGBCY>