Lead 637 Post #1 by Janine Lim

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Hi everyone,

I'm looking forward to learning with all of you. My official title is Instructional Technology Consultant at the Berrien County ISD (education service agency) and I mainly coordinate videoconferencing as an enrichment to the curriculum and for PD and meetings. I also do some teaching online. I collected some data on one of my online classes and did a qualitative analysis of it (basic hermeneutic). Also now that I've taken stats I have some new research questions popping in my head. I'm taking EDRM605 this summer too and am in the middle of collecting some data that might be able to be used for that research project. I am doing my dissertation on the role of school level videoconferencing coordinators and the utilization of videoconferencing.

For my data searches in this class, I've collected about 200 references on videoconferencing already (mostly done in December), but some of them don't apply directly to my topic. I also haven't read them all or made notes on them, and I hope to make progress on that in this class. I have a list of about 20 trails related to videoconferencing that I want to search yet: authors that I ran across at work, topics that there must be something published on, keywords I want to search again on a specific database etc. The title for my dissertation currently is: An International Survey of Coordinators in K-12 Schools Implementing Curriculum Videoconferencing. I might do some searches and article reading related to one of the competencies this summer too. So those are the searching trails I plan to follow this summer.

There aren't any journals that are just about videoconferencing, but my larger field is educational technology and distance education. So I actually subscribed to another database that the AU library doesn't currently support – and that is the EdITLib or the Educational IT Library. It has a couple journals that I've been browsing: Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia, International Journal on E-Learning, Journal of Interactive Learning Research. That's a few of them. Also the Blackwell Synergy database has the British Journal of Educational Technology which has some interesting articles as well. I hope that these journals will give me a broader background to my study. They cover topics like gaming in education, reading strategies with hypertext, design of learning objects, evaluations of various technologies & teaching strategies, instructor feedback in online courses, instructional design, characteristics of adult learners in an online environment, research on blogs in education, etc. I also hope to someday publish in one or more of these journals, so that's another good reason to read them.

I should probably also 'fess up to all of you that I took LEAD 880 Proposal Development in the spring and my proposal was approved in April. I'm collecting data for my dissertation right now. Although I have a literature review (in a basic form) I want to beef

it up more and I think this class will help me move more towards better synthesis and analysis of the articles I've been finding and reading.

Finally, on shortcuts and tips, stay tuned for more. To start with, and as an experiment, here's the first installment on my summer project:
http://outonalim.wordpress.com/2008/05/30/my-digital-scholar-space/
Enjoy!

Post #2 Due June 9

Major Understandings

1. Research as a "Path to Professional Development"
One thing that jumped out at me from chapter 1 is that research is professional development. I hadn't really thought of it that way before. It seemed like something "academics" did. ☺ In my yearly evaluations, I've had to write what I did that year for my own professional development. Now I realize that by reading research, evaluating research, and doing my own research, I am learning! It makes total sense for sure. I've already learned so much in the bit of reading I've done and begun to apply it to my daily practice at work.

2. Practitioner Research
I found the section on practitioner research intriguing (p. 18). The opportunities and dilemmas in many areas. I think one of the benefits is articulated in the chapter – the ability to make meaning and make a difference. A practitioner can see the point of how the research will actually impact real people; not just research for the fun of it.

3. Methods Fall From Questions
Another important understanding is that you start with your question and then the method comes from that. You shouldn't start with – I want to do a survey or I want to do a case study. Instead, you develop the question and then use the method that is most appropriate for answering that question.

My Weaknesses
One of my weaknesses comes from taking classes out of order. Chapter two emphasizes the necessity of understanding the assumptions and dominant worldview involved in the problem to be researched. I'm weak in this area but that will be remedied by taking LEAD 636. I'm already a little nervous about article critiques because I feel that I don't know enough to *critique* anything! But hopefully this class will help me feel more comfortable with research knowledge. On the readiness evaluation, I'm still very weak in the literature review and synthesis. I have collected a lot, but to actually read, critique and snythesize in an intelligent manner…. there's work to do there!

Research and My Practice
On page 40, O'Leary says that "reading is what can give you that broader context" discussing the anecdotal rich experience. When I write about videoconferencing on my blog, I've noticed already that I'm making connections to my experiences with the research that I've been reading. I'm starting to be able to quote researchers and theorists and make connections to my experiences. That's pretty exciting! I hope also that my own research will not only inform my practice, but those who read and follow my work. That seems pretty practical to me!

Life Without APA: Annoying

First Impressions
Yes, it's tedious, but APA and other formatting tools are really critical to presenting your research and ideas in a format that is readable to others. Just as our dress in an interview situation makes a first impression, our formatting makes a first impression for our writing. I've been interviewing potential student workers for the last week and a half, and one skill I'm looking for is attention to details due to the nature of the work. The resumes that come in with poor alignment and random capitalization here and there affect my perception of the applicant's capabilities. It's the same thing with our writing.

Incorrect Formatting is Distracting
I have a couple experiences that support my assertion that life without APA and formatting is annoying. In the LEAD 880 class we read each others' work and give feedback. After I had gotten into the habit of writing in APA, I found it really distracting to read a paper that wasn't in APA or had formatting errors. It really distracted me from the content of the work. If the reader can't get past the formatting, your real ideas and concepts won't get a fair evaluation. So really, it's out of respect for our professors (who know APA!) to write in that format so they can "cut to the chase" and focus on our content instead of correcting us on formatting.

Others Need to Find Your References
My second experience came from reading a seminal literature review in my area. This review is really important to my study. In fact, I had an article that I was trying to get published rejected because I didn't reference this literature review. So I had a healthy respect for it! As I read through, and then started collecting the references, I couldn't find some of them! It was really frustrating because the articles sounded so interesting. I also found that page numbers were wrong or other little things were incorrect. It made the search for their references very difficult.

The APA reference format at it's core is intended to help us find the references we read in articles. That's why the electronic resources supplement is very important as well. It's not enough just to cite it. You have to check again and make sure it didn't disappear off the Internet. If it disappears, you can't use it; you should get another reference in it's place. It's really really important that other people can find your references to understand the ideas and concepts on which your which is based.

Ok, I'll get off my soapbox now!!

Tips
As far as tips go, I've spent a few days in the last couple weeks putting up some tutorials.

APA Electronic References Blog Entry (if you'd rather read text and click links)
http://outonalim.wordpress.com/2008/03/30/apa-electronic-references/

My Video Tutorials

Background Info

- Overview of My Organizational System
- Why Use Endnote?

Collecting References

- Taking a Dissertation from ProQuest into Endnote
- Taking an Article from WilsonSelect to Endnote
- Taking an Article from ArticleFirst to Endnote
- Collecting References from an Important Lit Review
- Book Reference from WorldCat to Endnote

Electronic References

- APA Electronic References and Endnote
- APA Electronic References: DOIs
- APA Electronic References: ProQuest Dissertations

Endnote and Word

- Setting Up Endnote for Your IDP/LLP
- Writing a Paper with Endnote
- Checking Your Reference List for APA & Updating in Word

Word

- The AU Template, Headings, Table of Contents