By Heather Hersey and Sue Belcher

FLIP YOUR

In this video created with GoAnimate, characters representing Lakeside School library staff show students where to find their favorite books and periodicals, as well as video editing stations, IT support, and collaborative work spaces called Think Tanks.

LIBRARY

Just Ask!

> In the past I have seen the librarian as either somebody who is there to find you a good book or as somebody whose primary job is to keep order in the library.... I have seen librarians as not very internet savvy and clinging to a past where books were the main research source.
> —*Grade 9 student*

How do you change students' attitudes about libraries and librarians? You flip it!

As the idea of flipping the classroom took hold at Lakeside Upper School in Seattle, Washington, we began thinking about how the philosophy of flipping could be applied to the library too.

In general, library orientations include a tour of the facilities and a review of library functions and rules. Even though many schools have trimmed the part about rules or turned the tour into a scavenger hunt, we wondered if there were better ways to use the precious little time we had with the freshmen class at the beginning of the school year. The flipped classroom philosophy opened the door to a new way of thinking that shifted our priority from the rules, and our orientation from the physical space of the library, to building relationships with the students.

Tour and Library Expectations

Because we don't want rules to be the main association students make with the library, we moved the tour and the explanation of our expectations to the web. At home, students watch a library orientation video we created with GoAnimate.com that addresses both the general lay of the

misconceptions and reinforce our expectations in a fun, relaxed manner.

The "Just Ask" Mentality

Another influence on our decision to flip came in the form of an article shared by our middle school librarian, Lillian Godreau, called "What Students Don't Know" (bit.ly/o2ej4J). The article reports on the Ethnographic Research in Illinois Academic Libraries project (www.erialproject.org), which studied "how students view and use their campus libraries." They discovered that "students rarely ask librarians for help, even when they need it. The idea of a librarian as an academic expert who is available to talk about assignments and hold their hands through the research process is foreign to most students."

We realized that some of our students might also feel this way, so we made our number-one priority the cultivation of a "just ask" mentality. We even ordered color-changing pencils with our new slogan to give out at the end of orientation, and we now have sweatshirts for the library team with "Just Ask" on the back.

We really wanted students to view us as teachers with expertise in information and technological literacy that applies across content areas *and* as warm, friendly, and helpful adults on campus. This mentor relationship is key, especially as students take on ever more challenging inquiry tasks.

To get the conversation started, we ask students to read a small part of "What Students Don't Know" at home and respond to the following statements in a discussion forum:

• Students rarely ask librarians for help, even when they

"I don't ever remember asking librarians for help, and actually never truly considered them teachers until now."

We read the student responses ahead of time to prepare for our discussion of the article in school. During the discussion, we ask students which points resonated with them and if they disagreed with anything.

Student feedback has shown that we chose our focus wisely. One student said, "After reading the article, I see that asking librarians instead of Google is a good idea." Another wrote, "I don't ever remember asking librarians for help, and actually never truly considered them teachers until now."

Searching Skills and Fair Use

Before we introduce an activity about searching skills and fair use, we take a moment to acquaint students with Carol Kuhlthau's Information Search Process (goo.gl/KJXc1). Central to this process is the notion that uncertainty increases and decreases through the course of information seeking. We refer to the process throughout our students' four years here. For the discussion about searching and fair use, we focus mainly on the feelings associated with the research and the messy discomfort of learning.

We want to see what students know about searching databases and the web while introducing them to the idea of fair use. We have found that most students are unfamiliar with the concept of Creative Commons, and their reactions seem to fall either on the side of innocence or of being cautious to the point of stunting their creativity. A brief exercise at school provides the opportunity to plant the seeds of ethical information use while encouraging students to exercise their right to fair use.

We begin by having students find an article on the web and another in a database that would help them with the following scenario:

> You and your friends have been given permission to create a Lakeside Happenings podcast for the school website. What issues should you consider before using today's most popular songs in your podcast?

Students collaborate and take notes on a handout called Research Challenge (lakesideschool.libguides.com/home),

We then collect the handouts to get a better sense of what students understand about searching and fair use.

The experience of being there while students search is valuable and gives us some insight into their habits. For example, many students don't understand the difference between the open web and subscription databases, and many students weren't using quotation marks around phrases, which greatly reduces the number of irrelevant results in any search. Students were excited about the results they found in databases and professed that they would now include them as a regular source of information, which they may not have done if they hadn't been encouraged to use them during class time.

Work in Progress

During our second year, we had a longer period of 80 minutes, but we tried to fit in too much, focusing on exposure to ideas over depth of learning. Clearly, our flipped orientation is still a work in progress, but that hasn't stopped us from thinking about other ways to use the flipped model. Finding, evaluating, and using information has increased in complexity, and this requires the type of critical thinking and informed decision making that comes with guided practice. The flipped model holds promise because it opens up class time for analyzing scenarios, practicing in a low-stakes environment, and thinking collaboratively about topics that were previously considered content driven. For instance, our history department asked us to flip our instruction about paraphrasing, so we created a video (lakesideschool.libguides.com/tutorials) and are working on an accompanying quiz that primes students' thinking before they arrive at class so that we can check for understanding. This has allowed us and the classroom teachers to look at paraphrasing and plagiarism with more complexity during class time.

Through the experience of flipping our orientation,

"To be, or not to be..."
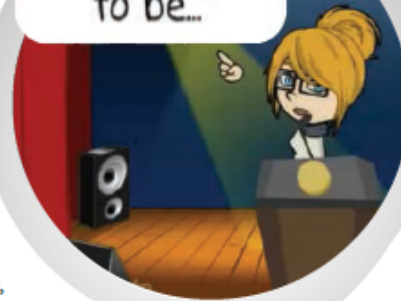
As one student put it, "If students got to know their librarians more, they would have the trust and confidence to ask about anything."

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