Oregon Librarians Encourage Students to Review Scholarly Blogs

College students can learn a lot by researching peer-reviewed journal articles written by noted academics. A case study from a pair of Oregon librarians shows lesser-known sources can also benefit students – blogs and other online conversations.

Anne-Marie Deitering and Kate Gronemyer have published “Beyond Peer-Reviewed Articles: Using Blogs to Enrich Students’ Understanding of Scholarly Work” in the journal portal: Libraries and the Academy. The journal is published by the Johns Hopkins University Press.

The article, which appears in the January 2011 issue (Volume 11, Issue 1) urges librarians to expose students to these online resources so students can better understand how researchers and academics develop the ideas which turn into journal articles.

“Following blogs or social networks where scholars are talking about their research and practice is not only an excellent way to keep current with the discipline but is also a way to find current teaching materials where the meta discourse, the disagreements, and discussions taking place between scholars are available to students; and the authors are visible in a way that they will never be in the scholars’ finished products,” the authors say.

Deitering is the Franklin McEdward Professor for Undergraduate Learning Initiatives at the Oregon State University Libraries. Gronemyer serves as an instructional librarian at Oregon State University-Cascades Campus.

They based their research on the methods used in a composition class at Oregon State where librarians and writing faculty worked together to develop a curriculum which gave students an understanding of researching scholarly work while also understanding the underlying debates and arguments outside of traditional library resources.

“Students need to see that the academic texts they are reading are written by real people, with intellectual agendas, biases, and points of view. They need to see how scholars blend their ideas with ideas from others to create new knowledge, before and after an article is published,” they say.