
Welcome!

Embracing Authenticity in Teaching Research Practices and Information Literacy: A Workshop will be starting soon.

To access presentation slides, go to: <https://go.osu.edu/authenticityloex26>



How are you
today?



Sleepy Snail



Curious Cat



Excited Eagle



Hungry Horse



Embracing Authenticity in Teaching Research Practices and Information Literacy

A Workshop

LOEX 2026



Presenter Info



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Workshop Outcomes

- Explore the idea of authenticity in relation to how we teach information literacy
- Recognize teaching practices common to librarians that may not align with understandings of authentic teaching
- Consider factors that may impact our ability to be authentic when teaching
- Reflect on the how you can incorporate authenticity into your teaching



Acknowledgement

This presentation was inspired by "Never have I ever used Google Scholar: hypocrisy and authenticity in library and academic skills teaching" presented by Rachel Davies and Joe Larkin from Leeds Beckett University.

Presented at the LILAC 2024 Conference in April 2024



<https://www.slideshare.net/slideshow/never-have-i-ever-used-google-scholar-hypocrisy-and-authenticity-in-library-and-academic-skills-teaching-rachel-davies/266750751>



A Few Preliminary Notes

- Not focused on creating "authentic" assignments/assessments or on "authentic learning experiences" but on being "authentic" in terms of how we talk about and teach research processes with students
- May seem a little controversial...the goal is to encourage discussion and not to criticize how you may be teaching research
- I am still learning about this topic and am not an expert on the idea of "authenticity" in teaching



Authentic Teaching and Information Literacy



Confession Time

- I rely significantly on Google Scholar when I search for sources for my research.
- I rarely use the library's search as a starting point, and I often will only use the catalog and databases when I am looking for known items.



Do You Have a Confession?

What is something that you do when searching for information or conducting research that differs from the guidance that is often provided to students? You can think as broadly as possible in terms of "research" and information literacy.

Share
at: <https://go.osu.edu/loex26padlet>



Reflection

- What does "authenticity in teaching" mean to you?
- What does an "authentic" teacher do?
- What does an "inauthentic" teacher do?



Authenticity in Teaching

"We cannot be authentic in teaching and ignore or not care about students, for that is what teaching is—helping others to learn." (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, pg. 21)



Authenticity in Teaching

- "Generally, adult educators have proposed that being an authentic teacher includes making sure ***our behaviors are congruent with our words*** (Brookfield, 1990; Ray & Anderson, 2000) and ***admitting we do not have all the answers and can make mistakes.***" (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, italics added)
- "Brookfield (1997) balanced credibility and authenticity; educators ***should practice what they preach*** and be sure not to espouse one way of working and then behave in a different way in their own teaching." (Cranton & Carusetta, 2004, italics added)



Authenticity in Teaching

- Consistency between values and actions
- Presentation of genuine self
- Being defined by oneself rather than by others' expectations
- Critically reflecting on how certain norms and practices have come about
- ***Making educational decisions and acting in ways that are in the best interest of students***
 - "A strong theme was 'Authenticity as teaching only what we are interested in versus Authenticity as teaching what we are interested in plus that *which students need to know about*'. (Kreber et al., 2010, emphasis added)
- Promoting the authenticity of the students (Kreber et al., 2007)



Acting in the Best Interest?

- "teachers may need to act in opposition to existing rules or conventions to act in the best interest of students..." (Kreber et al., 2007)
- "'doing what is necessary in the important interest of learners' is not the same as non-reflectively responding to expressed 'consumer interests'; instead, it concerns supporting the development and well-being of each student." (Kreber et al., 2010)

Inauthenticity

Could involve...

- Inconsistency between words and actions
- Concealing the truth (not being honest)
- Teaching something that you don't believe in or don't really care about
- Putting on a performance
- Following the rules (even if you don't believe in them)



Reflect and Share: Database Demonstrations and Authenticity

- Consider the pre-planned database demonstration that we know works
- Is this an example of an "authentic" teaching practice?



Authenticity: Exploring Benefits and Harms



Authenticity: What are the Benefits?

- Providing a more "realistic" perspective on the research process
- Validating the learners' experiences
- Greater accessibility: navigating the hidden curriculum, helping to demystify the process (Davies & Larkin)



Authenticity: What's the Harm?

- Could cause students to become disengaged (if they think that things don't really work)
- Students may need greater "guard rails" early in their career, without them they may struggle more
- Create friction with colleagues or administration
- Not acting in the best interests of students



Inauthenticity: What's the Harm?

- To students?
 - Could create an atmosphere of distrust or increase frustration when the things that we tell them to do don't work well
 - Could make students feel that their authentic selves are not enough, that they are "wrong"
- To me as an instructor?
 - Feeling like a hypocrite
 - Lack of engagement in what I am teaching
 - Emotional labor to hide my feelings



A Note of Caution

- "Nor is there anything embedded within the concept of authenticity to guarantee that being one's true self will automatically have salutary effects, educational or otherwise." (Bialystok, 2015)
- "Being your true self may or may not result in standing out or being on the cutting edge of pedagogy. A true self could just as easily be quiet, risk-averse, and conformist." (Bialystok, 2015)



Reflection & Discussion

Do the potential benefits of being more authentic outweigh the potential harm?



Factors Impacting Authenticity



Reflection & Discussion

What are some of the reasons we may be less than "authentic" when teaching students how to conduct research?



Potential Factors Impacting Authenticity

- Lack of Experience/Confidence (Davies & Larkin)
 - Demonstrating a clear "right" method or process may seem more manageable
- Routine/Familiarity/Lack of Critical Reflection
 - This is how it has always been taught
- Credibility (Davies & Larkin)
 - Need to demonstrate our expertise/establish our status with students



Potential Factors Impacting Authority

- Professional Pressure
 - Need to be seen as aligning with the "best practices" as recognized across our disciplines or fields
- Institutional Pressure (Davies & Larkin)
 - Need to align with the values of the institution and decisions made by those in authority
 - "The rationale behind these sessions seems to have been, “if we’ve paid so much for these products we should show people how to use them.” (Hynes, 2021)



Potential Factors Impacting Authenticity

- Best Interests of the Students
 - Learning this will be valuable to my students
 - You have to learn the rules before you can break the rules



Authenticity and Information Literacy: Exploring Scenarios



Discussion Scenarios

- Each group will be assigned a (limited information) scenario.
- As a group, discuss the situation in relation to what we have learned about authenticity in teaching.
 - Discussion questions will be provided
- Consider: Is the librarian acting in an authentic manner?



Scenario #1:

- Trixie works at a library that has developed a standard lesson plan for all English 101 instruction sessions. The lesson includes a significant emphasis on showing students how to use Boolean operators.
- Trixie does not see much benefit in spending so much time teaching first-year students to use Boolean. She thinks that there are other topics that are much more relevant and believes that students will be able to find sources even without focusing on Boolean.
- However, when it is her turn to teach sessions for first-year students, Trixie always includes instruction on Boolean operators even though she doesn't enjoy teaching the concept.

Scenario #2:

- Every semester, Tucker gives an open workshop for graduate students, intended to help them develop greater competency with academic research. Tucker always begins the workshop by providing an in-depth overview of how to use the library's discovery search system.
- Tucker does not really think that the library's discovery system actually works well. He rarely uses it himself, preferring to search directly in the databases he knows are relevant. However, Tucker knows that his supervisors would not be happy if he told the students that the library's search system doesn't work very well. And he figures that it's probably good for them to at least know about it, even if it would not be his top recommendation for searching.



Scenario #3

- Treat is a librarian who was invited by a faculty member to give a presentation on how students in an upper-level psychology course can effectively and ethically incorporate generative AI into their research process. Treat has significant reservations about using AI in research, believing that using it will prevent students from developing research competencies and critical thinking skills that they need. He also has ethical concerns about AI, especially related to the environmental impact.
- Treat's supervisor tells him he has the option to decline the request if he doesn't think it is appropriate. After thinking it over, Treat decides not to teach the session.

Scenario #4

- Hazel is assigned the task of revising a 1-credit hour, 7-week information literacy course, intended to help first-year students understand the basics of academic research. The previous course designer based the course on the *Framework for Information Literacy* and included significant content on concepts such as "Scholarship as Conversation" and "Information Creation as a Process."
- Hazel strongly feels that the conceptual focus of the course is not appropriate for first-year students, especially given the limited time frame. Although she receives some pushback from her colleagues, who feel her plans are too basic, Hazel redesigns the course to focus more on foundational, skills-based topics like "how to search a database" and "how to create an APA citation."



Scenario #5

- Kia is working with a course instructor to develop a new research assignment for students in an economics course. One of the requirements that the instructor wants to include is that students are *only* allowed to use peer-reviewed articles in their papers. Kia knows that most of the students in the course are first- and second-year students, although there are some upper-level students. In addition, the course is also open to students from all different majors.
- Kia feels that peer-reviewed economics articles may be too complicated for many of the students in the course, especially first-year students and non-majors. She wants to recommend that students be allowed to use a wider range of sources, including encyclopedia articles. However, Kia has never worked with this instructor before, so she decides not to share her concerns.

Discussion Prompts

- Based on your understanding of authentic teaching practices, is the librarian being an "authentic" educator?
 - Practicing what they preach?
 - Being sincere and honest?
 - Demonstrating care for students?
 - Acting in the best interest of students? Promoting authenticity in students?
 - Being defined by their own expectations, not others?
- What factors might be contributing to the decision that the librarian makes?
- What impact might the librarian's actions have on students?
- What impact might the librarian's actions have on them personally or professionally?
- If the librarian is not being authentic, from your perspective, what actions could they potentially take to be more authentic?



Authenticity: The Way Forward?



"Useful" Authenticity



- Being as authentic as possible... (Davies & Larkin)
 - But not to the detriment of the students
 - But not to your own detriment
- Consider how the context may determine when you can be more or less authentic



Reflect & Share

- What is a teaching practice you engage in that you feel is less than authentic?
- Keeping the idea of "useful" authenticity in mind, how might you change this practice?



Questions or Comments

What was your key takeaway from this workshop?



Teaching Information Literacy Certificate

Certificate: We offer a Teaching Information Literacy Certificate from the Ohio State Libraries Teaching and Learning Department. To learn more: <https://go.osu.edu/tilcertificate>

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