Scholarly vs. Popular

Goals: Introduce students to the differences between scholarly (academic) and popular sources and appropriate use for each source.

Outcomes:
- Students will list a minimum of four differences (at least four) between scholarly and popular sources in order to establish criteria for distinguishing between the two sources of information.
- Students will use the criteria to judge whether two articles on the same topic are scholarly or popular.

Materials:
- Instruction room with computers and a projector;
- Hardcopies of sample scholarly journals and popular magazines;
- One sample article from a scholarly source and one from a popular source on the same topic (ideally a topic related to the class);
- Optional: a dry eraser board and markers.

Time Required: 30 minutes maximum/20 minutes minimum

Lesson:
- Use one academic journal and one popular magazine as example, and ask students how they are different (cover design, publisher, and more). [2 min]
- **Discussion:** Provide hardcopy examples of titles from each category and lead students into discussion of what they think differentiates a scholarly journal from a popular magazine (the purpose of the publication, audience, authorship, the format/structure of the articles, and most important of all, the reviewing/editorial process). The librarian should post their ideas on the board and create a list of criteria. [8 min]
- **Action:** Pair up the students and provide each pair with a copy of a scholarly article and a copy of popular magazine article on the same topic. Students will use the criteria list and discuss which one is scholarly and which one is popular and why. Report their findings to the class. [5 min]
- **Discussion:** Talk briefly about when it is appropriate to use these sources for academic papers (usu. scholarly articles because of its reliability of information; but popular articles can sometimes be used as primary source for analysis). [3 min]
- Talk briefly about where scholarly articles and popular magazine articles can found in the library (especially the databases). Examples of databases that include popular sources: ProQuest, Lexis-Nexis, Reader's Guide Abstracts; examples of databases of scholarly information: JStor, Project Muse, Web of Science etc. [2 min]

Scholarly vs. Popular Assignment

Librarian:_____   Due Date: _____

Professor:_____

Please perform ALL of the tasks on this list. For this assignment, you may not work in groups or share answers.

1) Choose a research topic that is relevant to your class:_____

2) Find one (1) article from a SCHOLARLY source and one (1) article from a POPULAR source on your chosen topic. For each article you must provide:
   - The title of the article.
   - The author of the article, including his or her full name, educational background and institutional affiliation.
   - The title of the journal in which the article is published, as well as publication date, volume number, issue number, and page numbers on which the article appears.
   - A 3- to 5- sentence explanation of how you decided whether the article is scholarly or popular.

3) Explain in 3 to 5 sentences how you would use either of the articles, if at all, for a research paper, and why?

4) Write down at least one thing about this lesson that was difficult, or that you did not understand; and one that was new/previously unknown to you.