Think librarians are dark rooms with stale air and dusty books, where research is done by mad scientists and leads to “a quick answer” you can sign up for all-hour individual consultations with a librarian. In fact, resources they need to write papers or complete projects, faculty and staff can request similar consultations for their own research, or for assistance finding library resources to their Blackboard course websites or designing assignments that will help students develop their information literacy skills. Faculty can bring classes to the Library’s instruction workroom custom designed to meet the class’s needs. GCC librarians have been busy helping students since before the fall semester began. During new student orientation, GCC librarians presented a Library orientation workshop and met with students at the resource desk, handing out Library cards. They held “Library Boot Camp” sessions during the first two weeks of the semester to help students and faculty learn about the available resources. As the video “commercial” says, GCC’s Library can do what the “wimpy internet” can’t. Google and Yahoo help find information, but their engines won’t find many of the articles and books available through GCC’s Library, especially academic journal articles written by students and faculty research. GCC librarians are experts in demystifying the notion of research. Everyone conducts “research” everyday – looking up a phone number, finding a receipt in a wallet, or looking at a map to find a friend’s new house. Finding information for a class paper is very similar, except instead of looking in a cookbook or in print, the researcher uses a database of journal articles. The process is similar, the tools are different. Ellen Carey, Library Co-Coordinator, points out that GCC librarians do more than help people find information, they help them evaluate the information they find. In the information age, “databases” are a core part of college instruction. Just like the stressed-out star of the video “commercial,” GCC students are fortunate to have a library and a wide array of resources to help them meet their specific educational goals. Needed help? Our librarians can help you properly cite information for a class paper. GCC librarians do more than help people write papers or complete projects. They help students find the resources they need to find a friend’s new house. Finding information for a class paper is very similar, except instead of looking in a cookbook or in print, the researcher uses a database of journal articles. The process is similar, the tools are different.

By Mary McClintock

GCC’s Library Does What the “Wimpy Internet Can’t”

A screen from the GCC Library’s new video “commercial” on YouTube (available on the library website, www.gcc.mass.edu/library) with the line “A quick answer – looking up a phone number, finding a receipt in a wallet, or looking at a map to find a friend’s new house. Finding information for a class paper is very similar, except instead of looking in a cookbook or in print, the researcher uses a database of journal articles. The process is similar, the tools are different.”

GCC Student Brings Home Language, Life-Saving Skills from Abroad by Natalia Munoz

In an emergency, communication is the difference between life and death. For Samuel Hudnell, an EMT and firefighter, using languages other than English is an option. The Community College student and 29-year-old father of two was moved to first responder skills when his children were born. “I really need to learn to speak and sign for the survival of my 7-year-old and 3-year-old, so I would not be in a situation of wishing that I had learned them,” he said.

Then, when the Lewiston, Maine, town’s rural first-aid vehicle had an EMT in Springfield, a city with some 40,000 Latinos, some of whom do not speak English, he had another wish. Hudnell was among the recipients of the 2008 International Student Languages and Culture Travel Award granted by Greenfield Community College. He traveled to Guanajuato, Mexico, this summer for three weeks to learn Spanish, the language of the people and culture of his children’s world.

In Guanajuato, he attended classes taught bybben on Youtube came to mind as he walked around the city, he said, the fall of 1st. ‘I visited the Diego Rivera Museum, named after one of Mexico’s renowned artists, a muralist. During class, he learned the fundamentals of work-related words such as “hoy,” “right,” “left” and phrases such as “second floor to the right” and “a lot of.” While he says his Spanish class cannot make someone a fluent speaker, it provided him with key language skills and a window into the history and heritage of the people he helps.

“My work is an EMT and it is not always emergency. Sometimes it’s a simple transport but now I can have a conversation with the person. I can tell them, ‘I live in this country and this is what I do.’”

Before he left for Mexico, Hudnell had visited the English-speaking portion of Canada. The trip struck him as simple, he said, was enough for him to think of possibly moving there with his wife and kids one day. “I can be more effective in the community when I have a broader and deeper language experience,” she said, “and we need to gradually increase that number of people who have language experience. Let’s not forget that the Spanish language is the second language of the United States. We have a responsibility to ensure that our students learn about the lives of people with different world views and life experiences.”

Cacofon said that for the most part, financial, personal or professional constraints limit the opportunities for community college students to study abroad. “There are language and culture and so few people experience them.”

Hudnell remembers once riding in an ambulance as a trainee and watching the EMTs make hand gestures and jot down their instruments to the Spanish-speaking patient in an effort to communicate with him. Hudnell knew then that he did not want to do more to help than show a patient’s vital or administer first responder skills. “I wanted to open the lines of communication,” he said.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Living the Dream & Bright Light Awards

Greenfield Community College invites nominations for the “Living the Dream” and “Bright Light” awards. This award seeks to recognize one student and one employee who have carried on the ideals of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., in the community and on campus. Nominations should be made in the form of a letter to:
President Robert L. Papa, GCC
One College Drive
Greenfield, Massachusetts 01301-9739

The deadline is Friday, December 5, 2008. Awards will be presented on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 20, 2009. For more information, contact Herb Hentz at 413-775-1808.

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