

Tracing the Conversation

ACRL Frame: Scholarship as Conversation

Purpose: Equip students to understand how a particular source is part of a larger, ongoing conversation.

Resources: Tracing the Conversation handout

Time Required: 40 minutes (minimum)

Lesson Plan:

Pre-Work (Students):

- Bring a scholarly article or book that is relevant to your research topic to class.
- Read MLA Citations handout

In Class:

- Debrief: **5 mins**
 - What questions (if any) do you have about the MLA Citation reading?
- Lead-In Reflection Question: **5 mins**
 - Imagine yourself meeting your friends at a coffee shop. They are already deep in conversation when you arrive. What approaches do you take to enter the conversation?
 - Today we're going to explore how you can begin to understand and enter into ongoing scholarly conversations. Provide an overview of the plans for the session.
- Hands-On: Looking Backwards section of handout **15 mins**
 - Reflection: What worked well in tracing sources backward? What was challenging?
- Demonstrate Cited Reference searching in Google Scholar **<5 mins**
- Hands-On: Looking Forward section of handout **10 mins**
 - Reflection: How might you use these research skills in other classes and future research assignments?
- Use the remainder of the time for continued hands-on research. **remainder**

Note: This activity is most effective in a second library session after students have already learned the basics of searching but could be adapted for a single-session.

Variations:

- Could use this with either a scholarly article or book, a researched journalistic piece ([example](#)), or a combination of source types, depending on the focus of the course.
- Rather than have students bring a source to class, the librarian could select a particular publication for the class to use as a general example.