Assessment Method
Students in 8 Voices of Community classes were given instruction on how to search a periodical database to effectively identify articles on a subject. Following the instruction students were given a series of 10 questions to complete. These questions provided students with experience searching a database using different search methods, finding specific pieces of information, verifying information, and identifying the elements of a citation.

Goals of the Exercise
• Find and retrieve articles from a periodical database
• Use different search options to focus search results
• Identify article subject headings, citation information, and availability of full-text
• Effectively apply limit to search results

Skill 1: Search a periodical database using a specified search term and function
Question 1: Do a title search for the article “Information Inaccuracy”
121 out of 122 students (99%) completed this task successfully
1 out of 122 students (1%) were unable to complete this task

Skill 2: Identify subject terms
Question 2: What are the subject terms for this article?
115 out of 122 students (94%) accurately identified the subject terms
6 out of 122 students (5%) inaccurately identified the subject terms
1 out of 122 students (1%) did not answer this question

Skill 3: Find specific information in an article
Question 3: This article discusses the reported death of which 2 United States Senators?
119 out of 122 students (98%) answered this question accurately
2 out of 122 students (2%) did not answer this question

Question 4: What resource reported these deaths?
101 out of 122 students (83%) answered this question accurately
19 out of 122 students (15%) answered this question inaccurately
2 out of 122 students (2%) did not answer this question

Skill 4: Search a periodical database to find a specific piece of information. Construct the database search using own search terms and search functions.
Question 5: For each senator, find an article that verifies their death.
Senator 1:
112 out of 122 students (92%) identified an article on the specified subject
10 out of 122 students (8%) did not answer this question

Senator 2:
108 out of 122 students (89%) identified an article on the specified subject
14 out of 122 students (11%) did not answer this question

Skill 5: Select effective search terms and search functions

Question 6: Please explain how you found the article for Senator 2.

What terms did you enter into the search box?
109 out of 122 students (90%) identified appropriate search terms
13 students (10%) did not answer this question

Did you use an option from the drop-down menu?
48 out of 122 students (39%) selected an effective search function
55 out of 122 students (45%) did not use a search function
4 out of 122 students (3%) selected an ineffective search function
15 out of 122 students (12%) did not answer this question

Skill 6: Identify elements of a citation

Question 5: Provide article title, periodical title, and publication date.

Senator 1
93 out of 122 students (76%) provided a complete article citation
15 out of 122 students (12%) provided an incomplete article citation
7 out of 122 students (6%) provided an incorrect article citation
7 out of 122 students (6%) did not answer this question

Senator 2
84 out of 122 students (69%) provided a complete article citation
18 out of 122 students (15%) provided an incomplete article citation
7 out of 122 students (6%) provided an incorrect article citation
13 out of 122 students (10%) did not answer this question

Skill 7: Limit search results to articles from academic journals

Question 7: Do a person search for the senator who died in 2009 and limit your search results to academic journals. How many articles are retrieved?
51 out of 122 students (42%) answered this question accurately
53 students (43%) answered this question inaccurately
18 students (15%) did not answer this question

Skill 8: Identify full-text articles

Question 8: Do a person search for the senator who died in 2010. How many articles are available as full-text?
58 out of 122 students (48%) answered this question accurately
41 out of 122 students (34%) answered this question inaccurately
23 out of 122 students (19%) did not answer this question

Observations
Some students had more time to complete the questions than other students. Some questions that were not answered may have been a result of a lack of time. However, it is difficult to conclude whether or not questions that went unanswered were due to time constraints or if students could not identify an answer to the question.

Conclusions
These questions provided students with practice using different search options and features of a periodical database. Students demonstrated a strong ability to retrieve information from Academic Search Premier when given specific information and a basic task to complete. For example, when asked to find a specific article nearly all students were able to complete this task. Success was still high but to a lesser extent when students were given a subject and asked to develop their own search terms and search method. Question 5 asked students to find 2 articles on different subjects. 92% of students were able to identify the first article and 89% were able to identify a second article. Though students were able to find articles independently they found it more challenging to identify who wrote the articles and when and where these items were published. Approximately ¾ of students were able to identify the citation of the articles. In understanding the features of the database, students demonstrated mixed ability to use these tools to their advantage. The vast majority of students, 94%, were able to identify the subject headings of an article, an important concept to understand and apply in order to search a database effectively. Students struggled with placing limits on searches for articles. Less than half of the students were able to limit searches to articles from academic journals or articles available as full-text. In summary, students demonstrated understanding of basic search methods but need additional practice refining searches.

Association of College and Research Libraries Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education outcomes achieved through this workshop
2.1.c Investigates the scope, content, and organization of information retrieval systems
2.1.d. Selects efficient and effective approaches for accessing the information needed from the investigative method or information retrieval system
2.2.b. Identifies keywords, synonyms and related terms for the information needed
2.2.c. Selects controlled vocabulary specific to the discipline or information retrieval source
2.2.d. Constructs a search strategy using appropriate commands for the information retrieval system selected (e.g., Boolean operators, truncation, and proximity for search engines; internal organizers such as indexes for books)
2.4.b. Identifies gaps in the information retrieved and determines if the search strategy should be revised
2.4.c. Repeats the search using the revised strategy as necessary
3.1.a Reads the text and selects main ideas
3.4.a. Determines whether information satisfies the research or other information need
3.7.a. Determines if original information need has been satisfied or if additional information is needed
3.7.b. Reviews search strategy and incorporates concepts as necessary