Discriminating writers of English have long relied on H.W. Fowler's *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* (Oxford University Press) as a guide to proper writing and speaking. Henry Watson Fowler, 1858-1933, was a British schoolmaster with very decided opinions about linguistic etiquette. The first edition of this work was published in April of 1906. It was reprinted in 1937 (with corrections), and in succeeding years. Finally, in 1965, it was revised, with some recognition of how American usage differed from British, by Sir Ernest Gowers, 1880-1966. Gowers, however, still retains much of the authoritarian flavor of Fowler. One usually thinks of Fowler / Gowers as laying down rules and laws rather than providing flexible guidelines for reflection, discussion, and judgment.

But, in 1996, a third edition, boldly entitled *The New Fowler's Modern English Usage*, was edited by R.W. Burchfield. Burchfield is an eminent linguist who takes, on the whole, a contemporary descriptive, rather than a more old-fashioned prescriptive, view of usage. In other words, Burchfield is inclined to be liberal and permissive where Fowler / Gowers were conservative and forbidding. For instance, Fowler and Gowers both disapproved of the use of the adverb "hopefully" as a substitute for "it is expected," (1965, p. 250) but Burchfield allows it (1996, p. 366). Fowler saw no problem with the word "disinterested" used in the sense of "uninterested," (the 1926 edition has no entry on the latter), but Gowers is saddened by the recognition that the old sense of "disinterested" to mean "impartial" has been lost: "A valuable differentiation is thus in need of rescue, if it is not too late" (1965, p. 134). Burchfield, ever the discreet and discrete objective recorder of usage behavior, notes that the "noun [disinterest] has or has had three branches of meaning" 1 that which is contrary to interest or advantage...now rare or obsolete...2 impartiality (recorded from 1658 onward and still current, but not in common use)...3 Absence of interest, unconcern..." (1996, p. 216).

As if anticipating objections from traditionalists, and not wishing to appear to be too liberal as compared to Gowers, Burchfield (depending on your point of view) either takes the long objective stance of the scholar, or "cops-out" by commenting that it is more usual to hear the word "disinterested" instead of "disinterest" when impartiality is meant. But Burchfield ends his article on this controversial word by saying: "The best course is to avoid using the noun 'disinterest' altogether until it has reached safe shores." (1996, p. 217) I can easily imagine Fowler bristling at this weak-kneed conclusion as well as calling attention to Burchfield's lazy cliché in the phrase "safe shores."

The University Libraries' Central Reference Department officially takes no stand on controversies of this sort. As far as funds and selection can take us, we attempt to present all sides of "word" disputes. Fowler, Gowers, and Burchfield can all be found on the shelves of the University Libraries. While individual scholars may have their preferences among somewhat competing authorities such as these, we, as reference librarians, take an even more cautious approach than Burchfield. We provide the reference sources, but the patron, alas, must make the final choice as to his (or her) preference in word selectivity and usage.

One Way to Learn
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The tutorial consists of several parts. The first thing that each student must do is take a short survey that assesses his/her library skills. Survey questions cover use of the online catalog, selection of appropriate periodical indexes, and location of the actual journal article, government document, or book in the Libraries. Feedback from this initial testing is intended to give the students incentive to learn more about such resources. There are four instructional units in the main tutorial in which students (1) learn how to define their topics, (2) critically evaluate and choose information sources, (3) search WMU's online catalog and databases, and (4) visit Internet sites relevant to their topics.

The Criminal Justice Tutorial was mounted, used by students, and tested during 1997. During its first year of implementation, simple observation of students or trial by colleagues uncovered numerous ways in which the design could be strengthened. Students irritably clicking on icons that lead nowhere quickly informs a project director of errors and flaws. Written surveys were also used to determine reactions of the students to the tutorial's "workability" and value. The results have been uniformly positive despite the inevitable first-time glitches, and modifications have been made. As a result of its existence on the Web, a highly regarded variable in its use, other instructors are also investigating similar tutorials for their disciplines. With appropriate staff and time, it is anticipated that, in a few years, a strong collection of tutorials for different areas of study will be available through the University Libraries to help students find their way through the web of information cyberspace.

The Criminal Justice Tutorial can be found on the Web at URL: http://unix.cc.wmich.edu/lib/web/vander/cj/index.html