

BUILDING CAMPUS-WIDE INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAMS

LYNN D. LAMPERT AND CATHERINE HARAS

INTRODUCTION

For libraries and their individual librarians, the task of finding and maintaining support for the development of campus-wide information literacy programs that incorporate information literacy student learning outcomes into required General Education (GE) programming is often very difficult. In fact, much of the literature that focuses on integrating information literacy (IL) student learning outcomes into campus-wide curricular programming characterizes the process in war-like battle stages (Kempcke, 2002), where librarians find themselves pitted against faculty and administrators who have other programmatic and territorial agenda issues to promote for placement within university curricular reform fronts. While there clearly are documented difficulties in gathering support for formally integrating information literacy into campus-wide university curricular outcomes and programs, there also are stories of success that can serve as models for individuals still working towards achieving this goal. This paper summarizes the reality of building campus-wide information literacy programs from the perspectives of two different institutions. A brief literature review is included to identify helpful research in this area of academic librarianship that may be unknown to newer generations of instruction librarians. Two campuses from the California State University System (Northridge and Los Angeles) discuss their approaches and successes at both garnering support for and developing campus-wide information literacy programs that incorporate information literacy student learning outcomes into required General Education programming.

Lampert (Chair, Reference & Instructional Services)
California State University, Northridge [Northridge, CA]

Haras (Information Literacy Coordinator)
California State University, Los Angeles [Los Angeles, CA]

LITERATURE REVIEW

A review of the literature covering efforts to integrate information literacy skills into required campus-wide curricular programming, like General Education programs, reveals a solid history. Beginning in the 1970s, as bibliographic instruction programs began to take more dynamic forms and grow within academic libraries' instructional contributions to campuses, the literature began to reflect librarians' growing desire to see students formally exposed to research skills with an emphasis on the critical thinking needed to carry out research at the university and beyond. As Evan Farber (1974) reported in his analysis of Earlham College's efforts to educate the library user, it is rare indeed that a university committee *sans* librarians would decide to have curriculum reform mandate the "inclusion of knowing how to use the library as a basic educational objective" (p.147). However, that was what Earlham College did in 1973 when it revisited its "general goals for the curriculum...and included [in them] competence in the skills of information retrieval and the use of the library for research purposes" (p.147). Certainly, the literature since then shows that what happened at Earlham College in 1973 has seldom been the norm, as most university libraries typically find themselves having to argue intensely for information literacy to be integrated into university-wide curricular goals. After Farber, other important research in this area reflects the rise of general education reform concerns within higher education in the 1990s and the impending impact of technology. Some of the most important work in this area can be found in the works of Rader (1989), Breivik & Gee (1989), Bernard & Jacobson (2002), Rockman (2002), and Sellen (2002). In terms of integrating information literacy into campus-wide required curricular programming, the bulk of this early literature can typically be characterized as offering general advice on how to approach garnering support for these efforts and, from historical perspectives, what to avoid when attempting to achieve this goal. Very little has since been written in a case study approach that actually documents not only how policies of curriculum integration are achieved, but also implemented

and assessed. More research also needs to be conducted on how the successful integration of information literacy student learning outcomes into campus-wide curriculum programming impacts the management of library instructional programs and departments and faculty-librarian collaborative relationships in both the classroom and beyond.

CSU CAMPUS-WIDE CURRICULAR INTEGRATION OF INFORMATION LITERACY: TWO CAMPUSES

California State University, Northridge

As one of 23 campus libraries of the California State University System, California State University, Northridge's (CSUN) Oviatt Library began its efforts to integrate information literacy into the campus-wide curricular programming in the 1990s. While the term information literacy had already gained some national and international recognition and following by the 1990s, the CSU adopted the term information competence (IC) to both define and propel its system-wide information literacy program. The system-wide Information Competence Working Group authored a 1995 report *Information Competence in the CSU* which defined information competence as, "the fusing or the integration of library literacy, computer literacy, media literacy, technological literacy, ethics, critical thinking, and communication skills". Following the information literacy vision of the CSU, CSUN's Oviatt Library went on to successfully have the CSU's adopted Information Competence (IC) student learning outcomes adopted into the General Education student learning outcomes in 2000 and throughout specific disciplinary curriculum across the campus, classroom faculty and library faculty over time. Today library faculty are still working collaboratively with discipline faculty to ensure that CSUN students develop these critical skills needed for lifelong learning and survival in today's information age across the curriculum offerings. With the General Education Reform process (2003-2005), in which the library had representation on both the campus Educational Policies Committee and General Education Reform Task Force, the GE requirement for Information Competence was greatly strengthened from its 2000 beginnings. The new language in the GE policy requires that students successfully complete two unit-bearing GE courses--one in the Basic Skills area and one within Subject Explorations--that have been officially designated as being Information Competence bearing in terms of both their intended student learning outcomes and course content. This new policy has truly created the development and revamping of course curricula across all of the CSUN's unique disciplines with IC courses emerging in fields ranging from Astronomy, Music, Engineering, Pan African Studies, English, History, and Geography. As part of the General Education Reform process, all sections of CSUN's GE Program will be recertified within a regular 5-year cycle. During this cycle, all courses either requesting IC status or GE recertification are assessed for their success in achieving their listed IC student learning outcomes.

The success of having information competence goals and student learning outcomes both adopted and strengthened (through reform) by the Faculty Senate and Educational Policies

Committee requires a long-standing and steadfast commitment on the part of librarians and library administration to forge channels of communication and support for this educational mission with campus policy bodies. It also requires continual reinforcement of the campus-wide definition of information literacy, and flexibility in terms of considering the varied modes of successfully delivering IC student learning outcomes across campus disciplines that differ in their pedagogical approaches to teaching students about research and information technology. In addition, the library has had to work closely with campus assessment officials and committees to ensure that proper assessment of information literacy can occur at the library instructional programming level as well as the course, department and campus-wide level. Our ability to do this has been greatly strengthened by the CSU's early sponsorship for and adoption of the National Educational Testing Service /ICT iSkills test.

The campus-wide programmatic changes that have occurred at both a policy and real-life implementation level involve intensified faculty and librarian collaboration and intensive planning throughout the academic year. These changes also impact the demand for information literacy sessions and require careful monitoring of the Reference and Instructional Services instructional load. Our library had over 22,000 students go through some form of library instruction in 2005-2006 before the implementation of the new GE plan, so during the 2006-2007 academic year we have begun measures to revamp our internal instructional offerings. Librarians are actively working to revise their lecture outlines and stratify the content of what they teach by avoiding repetition and focusing on covering identified information competence student learning outcomes at different levels of intensity. The research process is being examined and emphasized not only in a stratified way within the library's instructional classrooms, but also through library planning focused on diversifying its online instructional offerings by augmenting its static instructional web pages with more tutorials and interactive online modules that attempt to take advantage of newly emerging social networking tools. The emergence of many new GE courses that offer students the ability to complete IC requirements also requires that the library work to better integrate instruction into the delivery formats that these courses either currently utilize, or will in the future. This means that the library is now working with other partners on campus to integrate its instructional presence into Learning Management systems and other online and distance learning tools. As more and more courses--both within and outside of the General Education offerings--are moving online, the library and discipline departments will have to find new ways to offer information competence curriculum through online teaching vehicles that include both learning management systems and digital learning objects.

California State University, Los Angeles

The California State University, Los Angeles University Library has also been sustained through the CSU system-wide Information Competence initiative described above. Like its Northridge sister, Los Angeles has built on an information

literacy requirement adopted in 2000 and is in the process (2007) of revising its policies, strengthening them through the GE and EPC pipeline. Our aim is to formalize tiered instruction beyond the currently required Introduction to Higher Education IHE101 (freshman) and 301 (transfer) courses, embedding IC at the upper-division within the discipline or major and again at the graduate level.

Like CSUN, CSULA was able to initiate the reform effort through university governance. Six librarians currently hold seats on the Academic Senate and its Program Review, Education Policy Committee (EPC), General Education and Curriculum Subcommittees. Active outreach and faculty status have guaranteed librarians a place at the table in any information literacy discussion. However, the library is proactive in creating consent: In 2005 it constituted an Information Literacy Advisory Board, now composed of 20 key faculty, administrators, and librarians, which sponsored an information literacy plan and was able to use the plan to bring a request for policy revision before the Senate. This Advisory Committee also administered an online survey to CSULA faculty in 2006 concerning their perceptions of students' research habits (40% response rate). In tandem, the library assessed students' basic research skills for five consecutive quarters beginning in 2005 (N=2,900). Data from the faculty survey and the student pretest results gave the Advisory Committee a framework within which to advocate reform. Finally, outside accrediting bodies such as WASC (CSULA is up for review in 2009) also exert authority in the ongoing process of curricular innovation, and accreditation can be used to influence IC outcomes in a department, program, or campus. To this end, a librarian is also participating on one of the WASC research teams.

There have been programmatic instruction efforts on campus since the 1990s, when the library held continuous workshops for almost 600 faculty on discipline-specific IC, resulting in several required courses in the GE including Biology 155 and English 102, as well as some professional programs, such as business. CSULA Librarians use a liaison model and have been successful in discreet outreach efforts with many faculty. Formation of the Advisory Committee, continuing liaison work, and collaboration with faculty on several CSU-sponsored information competence grants has expanded change to entire departments such as the School of Nursing, which embeds IC progressively in five courses. We have also reached the college level by collaborating with the College of Natural and Social Sciences (NSS) to redesign IHE 101 as a successful 4-unit pilot with a substantial information literacy component appropriate to the sciences (NSS 154), and with the College of Health and Human Services to require library intervention (an online tutorial and assessment) beyond the IHE for students who under-perform on a pretest. Different colleges expect a relevant delivery of IL. The library is also authoring a series of discipline-specific library tutorials that can be integrated into course management software. This is an effort to further refine IL within a specific discipline without necessarily having students come into the library.

A number of the policy changes now being reviewed by the Educational Policies Committee are related to information literacy. At the entry level, the IHE 101 and IHE 301 courses

will be modified to emphasize information literacy; at the upper division level, IC will be embedded within the upper-division writing requirement in the major or by courses a department designates as information intensive. We expect major revision of the policy in 2007.

Policy cannot build or sustain campus interest. The experience of research has to be developed and delivered in a way that is meaningful for faculty and students. The CSULA Library was able to tap into a local culture and create an interest and need for its curriculum by demonstrating student success with early supporters. Many CSULA learners are linguistically diverse, second language minorities. The library takes advantage of and collaborates with student outreach programs such as Student Support Services' EOP (Equal Opportunity Program), a mainstay on the campus for 35 years, as well as training mentors at the University Writing Center. Working with programs like EOP arguably began the University Library's effort on campus, as these reach many students and are critical to the academic writing process. The library's adaptability and ongoing awareness of and outreach to the learning needs of a specific campus culture is what has allowed our program to grow.

Library instruction has increased 30% in five years, from 528 sessions in 2002 to 780 sessions in 2006. In order to negotiate a sustainable teaching model for librarians while assuring student success, the library is increasingly focused on collaborative research assignment design, developing a nuanced understanding of the academic literacy of our students and their pedagogical needs, and delivering relevant information skills in multiple formats.

CONCLUSION

Librarians at California State University Northridge and Los Angeles have learned that faculty status, which librarians have at all CSU campuses, is not enough to secure a foundation for or final result of building information literacy programs into general education or other campus-wide curricular programs.

Other key components include:

- Strong cross-campus curricular involvement (committee work, liaison programs, assessment)
- An awareness of timing – involvement in and awareness of GE Reform efforts, program review, curriculum reform cycles and upcoming accreditation visits such as WASC Review
- Maintaining a well-developed information literacy program that is tiered from Freshman (FYE) to Seniors (capstone) with subject specialization intervention being the norm
- Participation on campus-wide committees with political awareness that involves a wider perspective that just focusing on library issues
- Conduct a continual environmental scan for issues of articulation (High Schools, Community Colleges, Grad Schools)

Other Possible Pathways to success outside of GE Reform may include:

- WAC “Writing Across the Curriculum”
- Peer mentor programs
- Student Services co-curricular learning models
- Writing or tutorial centers
- Cultural and linguistic minorities
- Service learning/community-based programs
- Delivery/mode of Instruction changes
- Disciplinary accreditation
- Professional/trade school
- State and federal mandates

Establishing and maintaining campus-wide information literacy programs, whether they are meshed into required General Education curricular programming or other university-wide academic programs, requires both an active awareness and understanding of campus politics and structures. As Douglas G. Birdsall notes in his important work, *Strategic Planning in Academic Libraries: A Political Perspective* (1997), “Although a knowledge of the political nature of the university does not ensure success in strategic planning endeavors, library leaders who do understand such things, and thus are able to build coalitions with external constituencies, will be in a far better position to achieve their goals” (paragraph 21).

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