

ACRL Information Literacy Immersion, Program Track

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Report by Laura Burt, North Park University

In July of 2008, I attended the Information Literacy Immersion at San Diego, CA. I applied for this program because I wanted the Brandel Library to begin to think of information literacy as an experiential and developmental skill necessary to students, one which would engage the whole campus rather than just the library. While I learned all this and more, the most valuable takeaway from Immersion was the sense of excitement I now feel about the library's place in education and the possibilities for Information Literacy at North Park University.

The experience was intense. I attended lectures, group meetings, and discussions from early in the morning until late each night. While I didn't do much reading at Immersion—there were assigned readings we had to do in advance—lectures added detail and insight to several of the articles we were assigned. I often spent my little free time trying to process the enormous amount of information we were given each day and adapting it to North Park University's culture and expectations for student learning. This is a process that I expect will continue for the foreseeable future!

One of the highlights of Immersion was Debra Gilchrist's presentations on assessment, both for individual courses and for programs. Her explanation of the role of outcomes and their function in assessment were incredibly helpful, as was her discussion of the role of assessment in a library that embraces its role as a learning institution. One of many of her ideas I plan to implement is publishing individual session outcomes where students can see them as class begins. This should demonstrate the main focus of the library session for students and give them a concrete sense of what skills and knowledge I would like them to acquire. I especially enjoyed Gilchrist's discussion of assessment as a library-wide endeavor, in which each library department picks correlated outcomes, and then tested a selection of these throughout the calendar year.

Randy Hensley, who was the faculty leader for my cohort, was also helpful at guiding my thinking about the shape of information literacy at North Park. He emphasized creative thinking about library structures and responsibilities in order to highlight information literacy, and also suggested that North Park focus on the general education program, as both instruction librarians are embedded in the program in different ways. Another of his questions—how

exactly information literacy fit into our campus mission of encouraging faith—is one I want to explore with many people on campus.

Other helpful Immersion sessions focused on the art of persuasive speaking, definitions of leadership, networking with faculty and senior college administration, and on the effect of campus culture upon planning. I now have a very long list of recommended readings in each of these topics, which I cannot wait to begin.

I came back from Immersion with a plan for enlisting campus support to create an Information literacy program. I'd like to begin with library discussions of our vision of information literacy at North Park, and then open the discussion to other interested faculty members. Together with these faculty members we can work on this definition, dream about the best possible program that would accomplish the dissemination of this information, and begin to implement our plan. Thanks to LIBRAS for helping to fund my participation in this valuable program!