

## **LIBRAS Information Literacy 101**

What follows are notes from nine break-out discussions, reported by the discussion facilitators.

### **How Do You Integrate Information Literacy Concepts into the Curriculum or Course Assignments?**

We talked about some ways to get faculty to want to take part in information literacy or bibliographic instruction. Some suggestions were:

1. Send database trials to them and ask for their opinions.
2. Do a demonstration for them, or have them sit in when vendors demonstrate a product
  - a. this could be for all faculty
  - b. or just one department at a time
3. Use an upcoming accreditation review to create leverage to encourage information literacy

We also talked about ways to help students engage more in instruction time:

1. Do a pre-announced exercise at the end of the session, so that they have in mind that they need to pay attention.
2. Offer time throughout the session for students to be working on finding books, articles, etc. After you demonstrate how to find a book in your catalog, for example, allow them 5 or 10 minutes to find one on their own and record it on a worksheet that they must complete.

Submitted by Gail Heideman  
Trinity International University

### **Taking Instruction to Where the Students Are**

This table topic session turned out to be a comparison regarding logistics for the two institutions participating. We discovered that we do instruction in similar types of facilities that may or may not have computers with access to the Internet. We discovered that we have similar multiple backups for technology problem. The instructors do not understand that when we encounter technology problems and are using a “low-tech” presentation technique that we are really on backup plan number 4 or 5. One institution has two people attend off-campus instructions, which is particularly important in certain locations. We discussed the impact on library services of having to schedule multiple instructions at the same time both on- and off-campus. Included in this thread was the impact of emergency situations on instruction and library services and how is that is communicated to an off-campus instructor. Finally, we chatted about an online course developed at one institution. We discovered that we have more similarities than differences, which was encouraging to all in attendance.

Submitted by Luann DeGreve  
Benedictine University

## **Active Learning or Creative Teaching: a Sharing of Ideas**

### **What a Librarian can do beforehand:**

- Encourage faculty member to reward participation
- Solicit questions/topics from students beforehand in order to use relevant example

### **Some activities to try in your classroom:**

- Topic lottery: have students write paper topics on cards, and have teacher or student choose one (from a hat or deck); use that topic as an example
- Have student do the searching/typing in front of class
- Have students interview each other on their topics
- Solicit terms from group when demonstrating Boolean
- Have groups compare websites and report on why one is more reliable, preferable to another
- Search for books in OPAC and physically go find material
- Have students(in groups) analyze printed article records and report out why or why not an article is a good find for a particular topic
- Distribute printed version of a scholarly and a popular article to small groups of students. Have them analyze the differences in audience, author, content, tone, etc. Come back as a large group to report findings and create a student-generated handout on the differences.
- Hands-on time, walking around, helping
- Separate the class into 2 panels- one side asking questions, the other side answering
- Choose a product or item (shoe, styrofoam cup) and trace its lifecycle from the time it is manufactured until the time it “returns to nature” (or does it?).
- Ask students to create a booklet, pamphlet, or powerpoint presentation as the end product of their research.
- Work in 2s or 3s to evaluate web pages and then demonstrate in front of class
- Groups comparing websites or free web (e.g. Hoovers.com) to subscription indexes and reporting on pros and cons
- Have a race – who can find an article faster? Those who use the web or those who use a database? Or a print index versus a database? This “race” idea can be applied to a variety of situations.
- Have other competitions between students
- Web Quests – which vary in so many ways from creating a web page to a guided learning activity where different groups of students take on different roles and examine the same issue from a variety of angles
- Have groups review reference books and report on why you would use it, how they’re organized, currency, etc.

### **Some practices to employ in aiding active learning:**

- Work with the faculty member on the assignment. Try to forestall any problems.
- Use relevant examples
- Don't dismiss Internet; be positive about the web. Show advanced search techniques in Google
- Use attention grabbers: scare them, intrigue them, surprise them.
- Employ problem-based learning – focus on an assignment that doesn't have a "solid answer" so that students can get emotionally involved in critical thinking and decision-making.
- Employ authentic presentation as a motivator for students.
- Offer in-class time to practice skills and be available out of class in case some students are intimidated to ask questions in front of peers.
- Introduce yourself, provide business cards and make sure students know that they can come to you for help. Give contact information (your email and phone) on handouts.
- Bring humor into class
- Point out similarities between websites and books- especially with returning adult students.
- Set up of room can assist teacher and active learning (walk around room, have computer screens facing instructor, or use classroom control software.)

Submitted by:

Susan Augustine  
Columbia College

Jennifer Paliatka  
Elmhurst College

### **Assessment**

We began our very informal discussion by going around the table and briefly stating where we were with assessment. Most libraries were in a similar position; no formal assessment currently in place and looking for ways to gather data.

We spent a good deal of time discussing the challenges or barriers to effective assessment. Chief among them was faculty protectiveness of their class time and structure. Another major challenge was the amount of time it required from librarians. One model of assessment involves reviewing the products of student research such as papers or speeches. One librarian in the group was involved in a class where the librarians observed student presentations. Although the data was valuable, it was questionable whether or not it was worth the time commitment.

One of the libraries represented at the table was anticipating an upcoming assessment through LibQual. They were at the stage of writing up learning outcomes. We all agreed that assessment was very important, but were disappointed that institution-wide

evaluations such as accreditation review often pay very little attention to the library. Assessment of information literacy programs are a good way to keep the library from dropping off the map.

We ended our discussion by meandering into related topics. We realized that assessment of information literacy overlaps with so many other aspects of librarianship. Even tracking database usage following instruction sessions is one way of gathering hard data.

Submitted by Ingrid Boyer  
Trinity Christian College

### **Information Literacy in Library Schools: What's Being Taught and What's Not**

How has information literacy affected your job?

- All librarians confront information literacy and the need to teach in their careers
- Change from providing the answers to patrons to teaching them how to find the answers

How have you been prepared to teach information literacy skills?

- Participant had not been prepared
- Agreement was reached that most recent library science grads are not prepared to teach to classes

Good examples of library school syllabi for classes that teach information literacy

- Dominican-LS 764-Library User Instruction
- Indiana University-L554-Education of Information Users
- Discussed the need for classes similar to these to be offered every semester or every year instead of every other year

What changes can be made in library schools regarding information literacy?

- Provide a course about education methods, learning and teaching styles, and active learning techniques

Do you think library schools are reluctant to offer these classes? Why?

- Theory vs. practice
- They are already offering many different types of courses

What changes can be made in libraries to help new librarians?

- Mentoring programs
- Co-teaching
- Professional development workshops teaching librarians education methods, learning styles, and active learning techniques

Submitted by Charlene Thompson  
Judson College

## Keeping Your Teaching Fresh

We all agreed it was as important to us as to our students to keep our ideas fresh:

- Reading professional literature:  
Burkhardt, Joanna M., MacDonald, Mary C., and Andree J. Rathemacher. *Teaching Information Literacy: 35 Practical, Standards-based Exercises for College Students*. Chicago: American Library Association, 2003.  
  
*First Year Student Library Instruction Programs* (Clip Note #33). Chicago: American Library Association, 2003.
- Listserves
  - [ILIModerator@aol.com](mailto:ILIModerator@aol.com)
  - Information Literacy and Instruction [infolit@library.berkeley.edu](mailto:infolit@library.berkeley.edu)
  - Information Literacy Instruction List at ALA
    - [ILI-L@ala.org](mailto:ILI-L@ala.org)
  - College Librarians Listserve (ACRL College libraries section)
    - [listserv@lists.wooster.edu](mailto:listserv@lists.wooster.edu)
    - Sub collib-1 your name (nothing in box)
- Sometimes it seems as if there are just too many new things going on that we need to master (e.g., classroom control software) to change our instruction approach.
- Sitting in colleagues' classes (A one year veteran said this was the most helpful thing for him, but it seems as if it might be equally if not more helpful for more seasoned instructors.)
- Faculty critiques of classes. One person gave the following suggestions she received:
  - Instead of saying "Are there any questions?" say "What questions do you have for me?"
  - Write terms on the board that you are using – often students might misspell or not understand the term you are using. This would be for an online exercise that they are doing.
- Faculty requests, such as one who didn't want a class session, but wanted the librarian to find several articles and book chapters available online and to post the persistent links. He would then have his students read this material and respond to it, thus seeing what appropriate, legitimate sources really look like, AND avoiding plagiarism problems. Not the traditional instruction session, but interesting.
- Thinking about the different learning styles and teaching to a variety of those – would ensure variety in teaching methods.
- Maybe have some formal pedagogical training (likening it to education students who student teach or graduate students who need to teach sections).
- Have back up plans for when internet is down (e.g., a Boolean search demo or power point presentation w/screen shots)
- Discussed advantages and disadvantages of "scripting" presentations ahead of time.
- Ghosting other librarians as they teach at other institutions. This suggestion, like that of sitting in on co-workers' classes, received the most interest. All of which suggests it's the one on one, in-person experience that seems more valuable than just reading ideas.

Submitted by Sally Anderson  
North Park University

## **Reaching Out To Adult Learners**

### **Populations served:**

- Community College Libraries: 85% adults, 15% high school age, but are unprepared for college
- Lemont Public Library: adult patrons are distance students at academic institutions
- Academic Libraries: have a mix of adults and traditional aged patrons.

### **Characteristics of Adult Patrons:**

- May be afraid of the technology
- Are appreciative of help
- As college students, they set high standards for themselves
- As college students, they procrastinate less than traditional-aged students
- Non-academic patrons have lower expectations than high school aged patrons
- Are very busy; may say, I have a ½ hour to do this before class/appointment, etc.
- Are very focused, have specific needs... NOW
- Prefer to interact with people rather than technology

### **How to Help Adult Students/Patrons:**

- Put need to learn the technology in terms to which they can relate, i.e. tell a nursing student that computing ability is required in hospitals, as patient records and other information is online.
- Break new tasks into small steps, and ensure that at each step the patron is successful.
- Provide opportunity for hands-on computer work.
- Encourage, but don't condescend.
- Pay attention to careful communication with those for whom English is a second language.
- Public libraries and academic libraries should communicate about distance students' needs.

Submitted by Nancy Mactague  
Aurora University

## **Staying Ahead of the Game – What Do This Year’s Freshmen Need To Know?**

It's hard to do information literacy instruction when you don't know if you'll ever get the students back after the first year. It's also hard to make sure you're getting all the freshmen. If you have transfers they won't have the same basics the freshmen had.

We discussed ways to reach freshmen where they are at.

- Have less of a streamlined and scripted class, and more about reaching the students with what they're interested in.
- Capture their attention by picking apart websites that they see a lot - AOL, New York Times. Teach them how to evaluate these sites.
- Other ideas for evaluation - blogs, hoax emails, sites that look legitimate ("Feline reactions to bearded men"). Teach them how to use critical thinking when approaching these sites, as well as a set of evaluation criteria.

Issue of students not being able to identify citations - the difference between books and articles. We need to make sure freshmen know how to do the rote stuff, with tours of the library. One library had a flash movie on their site for info lit skills (like the TILT tutorial) to reach students who never come into the library. We need to make sure to reach freshmen at their level; they're still young, but we should speak to them as adults. We don't have to entertain them with cutesy stuff.

We talked about for-credit classes on information literacy. It might be a better alternative to have a research component in regular classes. Information literacy can't be taught by itself - it is a process, a part of critical thinking.

Professors should be involved and active in classes. Classes work much better if there's been collaboration with faculty. Collaboration is sometimes upsetting to librarians - it's too fluid and open-ended. Find ways to break down walls with faculty. One library opens up their building for faculty meetings, art openings and faculty social gatherings. They serve alcohol and snacks.

Submitted by Rebecca Miller  
Lake Forest College

## **Teaching to Different Learning Styles**

Members of the learning styles table were new to the topic. We devoted some of our time to simply exploring ideas without any answers. Some of our questions centered on the meaning of learning styles while others questioned the activities we take for granted.

We wondered about the different activities we do and their usefulness. For example, we wondered about web pages. We devote a lot of time to building and updating web pages. One member thought the research showed they were not heavily used.

How effective are we with online tutorials? What learning styles work/do not work well with online tutorials? How do you assess if the tutorials are meeting the learning styles of the users? We thought linear thinkers do best with the tutorials. Some of us thought

the tutorials were important while others disagreed. Do linear thinkers benefit from step by step handouts or online tutorials?

Every faculty member has a learning style and s/he probably teaches in a way to support that style. When incorporating information literacy, we not only have to be aware of the students' styles but also the professor's style. How do we do that in such a short period of time?

We concluded with the thought that all students respond when we show our interest in their work and their academic success.

**Teaching to Different Learning Styles Bibliography** (Sharon – Please link to bibliography)

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Submitted by Anne Buchanan  
Concordia University