

Hand in Hand

Partners in Teaching, Learning, & Assessment Clarion University

April 2009

Volume 3, Issue 5

The ideal IL student.....	1
Information Literacy matters..	1
Applied, abstract or both...2	
Information partners.....	3
A research pipeline.....	3
A model IL assignment.....	4

April 2009

Workshop—Apr. 10th. *An introduction to discipline perspectives in information literacy.* 215 Carlson, 1:30-3:30pm.

Workshop—May 7th. *Promotion: Just do it!* Women Studies Center, 9-3pm.

Workshop—June 8th. *Student-centered learning.* Clarion River Lodge, 8:30-3pm.

Informal meetings, April 10, 24, May 1. Michelle's at 3:30pm.

The ideal IL student

~ PATTY KOLENICK (EDUCATION)

WHEN The General Education committee solicited faculty input on the proposed General Education learning outcomes, I eagerly offered an additional outcome that I felt would make Clarion University's learning outcomes more holistic. I proposed that students become "critical consumers of information"—i.e., information literate. But a series of essential questions arise: What is an information-literate student and how does one help to create one?

Although the professional literature is replete with a variety of definitions of information literacy, I believe the

American Library Association's (1989) (ALA) early statement is still one of the best—"understanding how to access and use information for lifelong learning" (p. 1).

I believe the ideal information-literate student has the ability to find, organize, analyze, evaluate, and integrate information to construct a


personal knowledge base from which to make intelligent decisions. The ideal information-literate students must also be able to communicate that information in a clear, credible, and ethical manner. Additionally, if I were asked to define the qualities and characteristics of an ideal information-literate student, I would suggest that she is an organized investigator, a critical and creative thinker, an effective communicator, and a responsible user of information.

Contemporary learning theory describes the student as an active and engaged information user and underscores the importance of students' developing



information expertise. The ALA's 1989 Presidential Committee report on information literacy stated,

"Information literacy is a survival skill in the information age. Instead of drowning in the abundance of information that floods their lives, information literate people know how to find, evaluate, and use information" (p. 7). Today's students live and learn in a world that has been altered by the ready availability of vast sources of information in a

variety of formats. Students must become skillful consumers and producers of information to thrive. We must teach students to be learners—individuals who ask questions, who seek information, evaluate it, apply it to new problems, and who assess how well the information has met their needs. 

Reference

American Library Association. (1989). *Final report of the American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy*. Chicago, IL: American Library Association.

Information Literacy matters

~MARY BUCHANAN (LIBRARY)

BRIEFLY DEFINED, information Literacy is "a set of abilities requiring individuals to 'recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information'" (ALA, 2006, para. 2). In the academic library community, we follow the standards promoted by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), which indicates that the information-literate student can:

What is *Hand in Hand*?

Hand in Hand is a monthly e-newsletter published by Partners in Teaching, Learning and Assessment at Clarion University. *HiH* is dedicated to recognizing good teaching, fostering excellence in teaching, and creating an environment that fosters learning among students and faculty alike. Partners' activities and *HiH* are supported by a Presidential Advancement grant.


We encourage submissions to *HiH* that focus on general rather than discipline-specific issues in teaching, especially articles that are creative, respectful, and recognize the best in all of us. Articles can be on teaching philosophies, technology, pedagogy, or book reviews, but should be no more than 600 words. Articles should be submitted for review in Word to jslattery. More information on submissions can be found at <http://psy1.clarion.edu/HiH/HiHguidelines.pdf>

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally. (ALA, 2000, pp. 2-3)

From the standards you can see that information literacy extends beyond library use and library instruction. Although many faculty already use part of these standards in their courses the Middle States Commission on Higher Education requires more of us and our institution. Quoting from Middle States Commission on Higher Education (2003), "when making the case that students who graduate are information literate, it is the institution's responsibility to ensure that information literacy goals are defined and that various elements scattered across the curriculum are identified as part of a coherent goal" (p. 6). On a local level, we know that we will need a task force to guide the creation of university-wide information literacy goals for the undergraduate curriculum.

Many faculty already integrate information literacy standards into their courses and assignments. A number of faculty bring their students to the library for information literacy sessions. For example, the College Reading and Study Skills course introduces the research process and then slowly builds on research techniques such as gathering reliable sources and creating drafts. Many English 111 classes use the standards as the students develop and apply critical thinking research skills. Discipline-specific courses such as English 199, Anthropology 362, Chemistry 270, Psychology 252 also require the students to dig into the published literature of their disciplines

to prepare them for further education, research and future employment.

As partners at this university, we are preparing to further refine information literacy skills and to highlight them and document them in our courses. To meet Middle States requirements, we will need to demonstrate discipline-specific information literacy skills and assessments. 

References

- American Library Association. (2006). *Information literacy for faculty and administrators*. From <http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/iss ues/infolit/infolitoverview/infolitforfac/info litfaculty.cfm>
- American Library Association. (2000). *Information literacy competency standards for higher education*. Chicago, IL: Author.
- Middle States Commission on Higher Education. (2003). *Developing research & communication skills: Guidelines for information literacy in the curriculum. Executive summary*. From <http://www.msche.org/publications/devskill 050208135642.pdf>

Applied, abstract or both

~ Miguel R. Olivas-Luján (Adm. Sci)

BUSINESS ACADEMICS often struggle with the dichotomy that research seems to propose: should we focus on applying knowledge or on generating abstract theoretical frameworks? In other words, should we help our students learn how to *solve* problems or *understand* the abstract research and theory in our field?

I believe that this is a false dichotomy. As teachers and scholars, we serve our constituents better when we show students how to do both: they must apply **and** they must be able to understand how knowledge is added to the discipline.

Managers ignore scientific evidence at their own peril.

Choosing only the application side of the dichotomy risks creating vocational graduates. Our Business graduates need more than simple checklists and recipes. They need to know how to motivate employees, establish or correct compensation systems, and reorganize their companies in order to optimize customer service, lower costs, and improve profits. These are complex tasks that cannot be achieved through a "cookie cutter" approach. Still, many are tempted to find some off-the-shelf best practice that might help businesses achieve their work goals. The Self-Help and Business sections of most bookstores are full of trade books offering simple steps and awesome habits to make the reader Super Manager. While some of these books provide useful advice, I believe that information literacy for business students—and for all university majors—should go beyond the ability to discern just an appropriate solution to a particular problem.

On the other hand, most of our students will not become social

Student-centered learning: An interactive retreat

Mark your calendars: Monday June 8, 2009, 8:30-3:30pm, Clarion River Lodge.

Everybody talks about it, but how do you actually do it? How do you transform your class into a student-centered learning environment? Join us to share your best practices, try out or develop a new one, or learn some new tips and tricks.

We are calling for participants from all disciplines to share examples of best practices, or "experimental" practices which you would like to try out and develop with the help of fellow retreat participants. Don't just tell us about it...demonstrate and DO IT with a willing "class" of colleagues and fellow participants.

Please submit your name, department, and a BRIEF description of your idea (1-2 sentences), approximate length of time you would need to demonstrate and DO IT. All types of ideas are welcome, from 10-15 minute mini-practices to 1 hour activities. Please send submissions to Suzie Boyden (sboyden@clarion.edu) by May 1.

scientists, occupied by testing or developing the theories that help us better conceptualize the problems that managers face in their careers. Nonetheless, I require students to summarize peer-reviewed, refereed articles from business journals because I want to give them a taste of how the business disciplines gather research and develop new theoretical approaches. As a founding member of the Evidence-Based Management Collaborative, (see: http://wpweb2.tepper.cmu.edu/rlang/ebm_conf/ for details) I strongly believe that graduates from a university-level business program should be able to access, evaluate, and use scientific evidence in their daily work practice.

It is unfortunate, as Rynes, Brown, and Colbert (2002) have illustrated, that many managers are often unaware of recent findings and their professional practice suffers as a result of their obsolete knowledge and skills. Rynes and her colleagues reported problems with personnel selection, goal-setting, performance appraisals, and monetary incentives. Likewise, Pfeffer and Sutton (2006) have reported how mergers and acquisitions, corporate strategy, change management, and leadership are areas in which practicing managers ignore scientific evidence at their own peril. Arguably, strong training in information literacy skills should help managers detect when they must update their practice and do so effectively.

The well-rounded, balanced education I aspire to offer my students is a combination of both application and understanding of the ways business problems are solved. I want our graduates to avoid this artificial dichotomy – and not leave their business decisions to chance or to “the way it used to be.”

References

- Pfeffer, J., & Sutton, R. I. (2006). *Hard facts, dangerous half-truths and total nonsense: Profiting from evidence-based management*. Boston: Harvard Business School Press.
- Rynes, S. L., Brown, K. G., & Colbert, A. E. (2002). Seven common misconceptions about human resource practices: Research findings versus

practitioner beliefs. *Academy of Management Executive*, 16(3), 92-103.

Information partners

~Linda Lillard (Library Science)

INFORMATION LITERACY is an important issue in all classes, but especially important for students learning online. Students learning in an online environment may not have direct physical access to our library or our research librarians. Students in web courses can have dramatically different levels of expertise in finding, evaluating and effectively using sources. If you plan on teaching a research-intensive online class, you might be interested in a project I have been working on for almost ten years. It evolved from initially “embedding” librarians in online classes to provide research assistance and information literacy instruction to more recently using library science students in that capacity.

Understanding and cultivating relationships with library users ... is an ideal way to create a dynamic library ...

This project is based on the findings of marketing researchers Parasuraman, Berry, and Zeithaml (1991) regarding relationships between customers and service providers. Many of the customers interviewed in their research indicated that they wanted to be known and cared about, preferring “ongoing personalized relationships with the same representatives” of the firms they deal with—representatives they came to see as partners (p. 43). Besant and Sharp (2000) believe that understanding and cultivating relationships with library users (relationship marketing) is an ideal way to create a dynamic library that is valuable to those users. Relationship marketing appeared to be a theoretical framework worth exploring in online courses to help students develop their research skills. I have been exploring ways to facilitate librarian/student/faculty relationships in online classrooms

for almost ten years. The project began with librarians being given instructor access to online nursing courses offered in Blackboard. They were able to observe student course participation and student needs and offer proactive point-of-need information services and instruction. The latest iterations of the project have involved library science students working closely with the distance learning librarian and the nursing instructors. These library science interns provide information assistance as well as information instructional materials. At the present time, two Clarion Library Science graduate students are embedded in nursing courses at the University of Central Missouri, the principal research site for this project for the past 10 years. Library science students gain an internship/apprentice experience, while nursing students and instructors benefit from a personalized information partnership throughout the course.

References

- Besant, L. X., & Sharp, D. (2000, March). Upsize this! Libraries need relationship marketing. *Information Outlook*, pp. 17-22.
- Parasuraman, A., Berry, L. L., & Zeithaml, V. A. (1991). Understanding customer expectations of service. *Sloan Management Review*, 32(3), 39-48.

A research pipeline

~Sandra Trejos (Economics)

AS PROFESSORS and scholars, we know that research can be overwhelming, but the scholarly work contributes to knowledge, and gets us closer to a truth in our field or discipline. The stronger our information literacy skills, the more efficient and rewarding our journey. We want our students to share this journey

Cool Stuff

Have you checked out **TED.com**? Ken Robinson concludes that schools kill creativity; he is both profound and entertaining. Sugata Mitra reaffirms the capacity of children to teach themselves when given the chance. Patrick Awuah movingly considers the role of a college education in creating leaders. Search at <http://www.ted.com> or just explore! J.E.

and gain these rewards.

In my Economic Development (ECON 363) class I assign a research paper. On the first day of class I discuss the project and its importance to their grade and learning. A few weeks into the semester, I give my students a handout, in which I set high expectations for the paper. I specifically emphasize using valuable sources from electronic databases such as JSTOR and EBSCO and working papers from global institutions such as United Nations and the World Bank. I explain how to access these sources or I ask students to attend a library session on information literacy. Last year, I was able to take a group of students for a customized session. Finally, I provide students with readings on research methodology.

I strongly suggest that my students imagine submitting their work to a regional or state economics conference as they develop their project and potentially do so when the project is completed. They submit early stages of the literature review, methodology, and data, one at a time, so I can give feedback before they begin analyzing their data. The final copy is submitted the week before they start presenting their papers as part of the ECON 363 Symposium. (This semester's symposium, to which everyone is welcome, starts on April 14th.) Students spend hours working on their papers and their statistical analyses. We meet individually one or more times as we work to improve their papers. Every student has something to share. They truly become experts in their topics.

Challenging undergraduate research depends on strong information literacy skills

I encourage students to submit a proposal for the Undergraduate Research Grants and for either the Pennsylvania Economics Association or the Midwest Economics Association Conferences. This project has become a pipeline, encouraging students to submit their research and begin to find research

rewarding in the ways that scholars do. Seeing students accept the research challenge is exciting and gratifying for all. However, challenging undergraduate research depends on strong information literacy, a key to the scholarly pipeline.



A model IL assignment

~ Greg Goodman (Education)

MY GOAL as a teacher of educational psychology is to have students walk away knowing and being able to articulate a solid answer to the question: How do children learn best? To answer this question, students are exposed to theories of behaviorism, constructivism, and critical constructivism and consider contributions from Piaget, Kohlberg, Skinner, Vygotsky and others. This study is followed by a major assignment – a 2000 word research paper on a specific topic covered in class. This exercise is designed to assure that every student leaves the class with a solid knowledge of at least one aspect of educational psychology and stronger information literacy (IL) skills.

I use curriculum mapping. I think about what I want my students to achieve, develop assignments that help them meet those goals, and establish criteria for assessments that reinforce what I want them to achieve. What do I want my students to know and be able to do by the end of the course? How will my students demonstrate their competency and knowledge? What assignments, lessons, lectures, and activities will achieve my goals? Their paper, while it helps them meet other course goals, is specifically designed to help them meet IL goals.

I break down the assignment into four components. Using a stalwart component of curriculum mapping, backward design, I ask my students to choose a title for their paper and to write an abstract. From this initial conception of what their paper may look like in final draft, they develop an outline, then first and final drafts. Throughout the assignment, I use multiple opportunities to reinforce the IL skills of asking good researchable

questions, seeking credible sources of information (not Wikis!), evaluating which information reinforces their arguments, and assessing how my students can incorporate this information into a solid argument defending their paper's topic (Gambrell, Morrow, & Pressley, 2007). By reading this paper as a first draft, I can see if my students are following best IL practices and if they are using APA Style correctly. Scaffolding the assignment in this manner allows me to guide students in following the information literacy skills set I've developed.

Critical thinking skills are an essential part of IL

I further reinforce the IL skill set developed in the paper with the everyday discussion in our classroom. We use IL skills to pull allusions and specific references from the readings to spur deeper consideration of the educational psychology topics at hand. Critical thinking skills are an essential part of IL.

It is essential that my students leave class able to articulate how children best learn. By guiding their learning using the best practices in IL, I feel I have lived up to my responsibility to help produce teachers who possess a solid understanding of educational psychology and how to best apply its principles.

References

Gambrell, L. B., Morrow, L. M., & Pressley, M. (2007). *Best practices in literacy instruction* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Editors: Jeanne M. Slattery
Melissa K. Downes
Debbie Ciesielka
John Ernissee

Guest Editors: Greg Goodman
Edna Reid

The opinions expressed in these articles reflect those of the authors themselves and may or may not reflect the views of the *HiH* editorial staff or those of Clarion University as a whole.