

LIRT News

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LIRT's Top Twenty for 2000

By the Continuing Education Committee, Susan Bissett, Doreen Harwood, Jonathan Helmke, Jim Millhorn, Chair, Frances Nadeau, and Elizabeth E. Walker.

Allan, George. "The Art of Learning with Difficulty." *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 6.2 (2000): 5-23.

Penned by a retired philosophy professor, this article offers an excellent, thought-provoking examination of the pedagogical principles underlying all serious inquiry. Allan's range of reference is extraordinary in that not only does he invoke philosophical immortals such as Plato and Aristotle, but also employs analogies to the piano and football to make his arguments. He makes it clear that many of our current problems are in fact perennial issues. As librarians and faculty, we are all concerned that students have more than a rudimentary knowledge of locating information, and that they cultivate a habit of leaving no stone unturned. In other words, educators should strive to instill an element of artistry and aesthetic pleasure into inquiry. This is an inspiring article for all teaching librarians.

Ark, Connie E. "A Comparison of Information Literacy Goals, Skills and Standards of Student Learning." *Ohio Media Spectrum* 51.4 (Winter 2000): 11-15.

In the light of current efforts aimed at establishing national education goals and standard measures for individual competencies, the author makes a strong case in favor of K-12 library media centers. Ark reviews a body of literature that correlates improved reading scores, and heightened computer literacy with access to well-funded and equipped library media centers. She reports from her home state of Ohio, where library media centers are rare at the grade school level, that reading scores are below average. The obvious implication is that Ohio legislators and educators should look closely at funding for library media centers as a means of improving student's information literacy skills.

Bell, Steven J. "Creating Learning Libraries in Support of Seamless Learning Cultures." *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 6.2 (2000): 45-58.

A seamless learning culture recognizes that students learn outside the classroom and often require assistance outside normal library channels. The author describes the paradigm shift from teaching to learning and from the traditional

lecture to situational or experiential learning. After describing the six principles of creating a seamless learning culture (SLC), the author describes models initiated by a number of academic libraries so as to "reach students when and where they are situated for learning." The University of Pennsylvania trained upper-class students as peer assistants, who provided reference assistance on nights and weekends in learning houses (special residence halls where faculty resides with students.) Temple University has also experimented with real-time interactive assistance using the software, TalkBack. The article culminates with another ambitious initiative in which fourteen Pennsylvania libraries created a Virtual Information Desk, which operates until midnight and provides reference service through e-mail.

Bruce, Christine Susan. "Information Literacy Research: Dimensions of the Emerging Collective Consciousness." *Australian Academic & Research Libraries* 31.2 (June 2000): 91-109.

Although information literacy research is a relatively new field, Bruce reviews its evolution and attempts to analyze the current state-of-the-art. The bibliographic instruction movements of the 1980s produced models and lists of skills. In the early 1990s, researchers surveyed employers for desirable skills and related information literacy skills to student learning. Researchers in the late 1990s identified a number of different paradigms associated with information literacy. Bruce predicts that current research will extend beyond the workplace to the community and will recognize the fundamental importance of interdisciplinary and cross-cultural investigations.

Caravello, Patti Schifter. "Library Instruction and Information Literacy for the Adult Learner: a Course and Its Lessons for Reference Work." *Reference Librarian* 69/70 (2000): 259-69.

This article describes a course, "Research Methods for Fiction, Nonfiction, and Film Writers," offered through the UCLA University Extension Service to adult learners. The author details the course format, objectives, exercises, final project, and evaluation of the course. The author also does a fine job of relating how reference services works hand-in-hand with adult learners.

Curl, Sheila R.; Reynolds, Leslie J.; Mai, Brent Alan. "Reality Check: Asynchronous Instruction Works!" *College & Research Libraries News* 61.7 (July/Aug. 2000): 586-8.

The article offers a narrative of the development of a library credit course for the Electrical Engineering Technology program at Purdue University. Initiated in 1993, the course was so successful that it was promoted to be broadcast over

the Indiana Higher Education Telecommunications System, and evolved into a Web-based program for the spring 1999 term. Despite the course's asynchronous foundation it was discovered that students performed better following some initial face-to-face meetings with instructors. In this manner the instructors could calm any anxiety about the asynchronous nature of the course, and eliminate the most common technical problems. The authors emphasize the necessity of maintaining open communication channels in order to assure the effectiveness and success of the course.

Curon, Susan Carol. "Developing a Program of Information Literacy: How California State University Did It." *College and Research Library News* 61.6 (June 2000): 483-6.

California State University's step-by-step process of developing a program of information literacy for their campuses is a useful guide for other academic institutions looking to do the same. While there is still work to do, the goal is that all CSU graduates possess a mastery of information skills. To meet the challenge librarians and faculty have been involved in myriad activities including forming committees, awarding grants, creating Web sites, generating reports, holding conferences and workshops, etc. In addition, CSU faculty has spearheaded outreach programs so as to work with schools and the community in forming common goals. Part of the reward for their labor was the adoption of an information literacy component in California High School Exit Examination.

Dennis, Stefanie; Broughton, Kelly. "FALCON: An Interactive Library Instruction Tutorial." *Reference Services Review: RSR* 28.1 (2000): 31-39.

In response to teaching large numbers of students, librarians at Bowling Green State University created FALCON, an interactive tutorial on using the library's online catalog. Students learn to search the catalog via FALCON at their own pace, and when librarians may not be available. An evaluation demonstrated that FALCON was effective because it was clear, concise and not too difficult. FALCON was included on ACRL's Instruction Section's "TM's Top Ten Tutorials, Exemplary Library Tutorials on the Web, 1998 Winners," as well as on a number of tutorial or information literacy Web pages.

Donnelly, Kimberly M. "Building the Learning Library: Where Do We Start?" *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 6.2 (2000): 59-75.

Following in the vein of Stephen Bell's article above, Donnelly describes the learning library and model programs. First, she provides analysis and description of the learning-centered approach, which is a formal, concrete, sequential program where competencies are integrated throughout the curriculum so that

students become information literate. She defines information literacy as a combination of library literacy, computer literacy and technology literacy. Her argument maintains that organizing such a program requires "wholehearted support from administration, faculty and librarians," and that "high costs are unavoidable." Secondly, the author describes model programs utilized by universities such as credit courses, freshman research experiences, core curriculum courses, Web tutorials, online workbooks, resource collections, and the like. A set of links is provided that stress "learning opportunities ...outside of a traditional classroom structure.

Germain, Carol Anne; Jacobson, Trudi; Kaczor, Sue A. "A Comparison of the Effectiveness of Presentation Formats for Instruction: Teaching First-Year Students at SUNY Albany." *College & Research Libraries* 61.1 (January 2000): 65-72.

This article examines how a library has provided library instruction to a First-Year Experience program and compares two methods of instruction; a Web-based instructional module of a tutorial, and direct instruction by a librarian. The study showed that both methods of instruction were effective based on a pre and post-test. Also, both formats made a positive difference in the number of correct answers. The authors concluded that the best method of instruction combine both Web-based assignments and face-to-face teacher contact.

Gibson, Kenneth E.; Silverberg, Michael. "A Two-Year Experience Teaching Computer Literacy to FirstYear Medical Students Using Skill-based Cohorts." *Bulletin of the Medical Library Association* 88.2 (April 2000): 157-64.

A case is made that medical students need to develop computer and management skills at the beginning of their medical education since providing information online is now a major part of the teaching and practice of medicine. At the State University of New York at Stony Brook, a course was developed and implemented on the use of computers to manage information. Based on a self-assessment, first-year medical students were divided into skill-based groups and a syllabus was adapted for three skill levels. Covered areas of instruction included computer basics, email management, MEDLINE, and Internet search tools. Although the noncredit program was deemed successful, the authors also outline goals for improvement in future classes.

Knapp, Patricia B. 1914-1972. "The Meaning of the Monteith College Library Program for Literary Education" (reprinted from *Journal of Education for Librarianship* Fall 1965). *Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 41.1 (Winter 2000): 5-12.

In celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the above publication, a single article was selected to commemorate each decade of the journal's existence. Knapp's article of 1965 today reads like an opening salvo in the battle for recognition of the necessity for systematic bibliographic instruction and information literacy. The primary argument is that librarians heretofore had not adequately developed what Knapp calls "general principles of library education." In outlining her vision of the academic librarian's role, one sees today what we dub intensive training through course integrated instruction. Thirty-five years after its initial appearance, it is illuminating to encounter these foundation stones of the discipline.

Lawler, Sally H.; Olson, Elizabeth A.; Chapelski, Elizabeth E. "Enhancing Library Research Skills of Graduate Students through Guided Autobiographies." *Behavioral and Social Sciences Librarian* 18.1 (1999): 33- 44.

The article details the collaboration of teaching and library faculty for an interdisciplinary graduate seminar on gerontology at Wayne State University. The seminar focused on newly enrolled graduate students, many of whom had been away from formal education for a good while. As a way of easing the students into the research process, they were encouraged to reminisce about the aged from their own personal experience. The librarian then intervened to turn these recollections into research questions, which could be searched systematically employing various bibliographic tools. This experiment offers a shining example of a resource based course assignment, and underlines a fruitful instance of teaching and library faculty collaboration.

Miller, Kristin. "Developing Good Research Habits: Encourage Students to Create a Working Bibliography Online." *College & Research Libraries News* 61.5 (May 2000): 418-420.

This article brings attention to a significant problem engendered by the new online and full-text research environment. The author finds that increased ease of access to materials has created an environment where students frequently do not exercise adequate selection and judgment in what they print, download and the like. The upshot is often sloppy research. To counteract this trend the author advocates a renewed emphasis on training techniques for the systematic collection and organization of information. One vehicle she sees as particularly valuable in encouraging higher quality papers is the implementation of a working bibliography for research assignments.

Pappas, Marjorie L. "Managing the Inquiry Learning Environment." *School Library Media Activities Monthly* 16.7 (March 2000): 27-30, 36.

After summarizing several definitions of "inquiry," Pappas reports that inquiry learning engages the student and utilizes questioning techniques that are fostered by coaching from the teacher or school library media specialist. The inquiry environment is open and flexible, with the student accessing primary resources and interviewing people. Management of the inquiry environment requires collaboration between teacher and school library media specialist to teach students to gather and use information; to engage in questioning and reflection; to work with others in groups; to plan their learning experiences; and to engage in assessment. For each of these management tasks, Pappas cites models. Finally, the author acknowledges the difficulty in changing from traditional approach to inquiry learning and suggests beginning with one curriculum unit

Potter, Theodore A. "A New Twist on an Old Plot: Legal Research is a Strategy, Not a Format". *Law Library Journal* 92.3 (Summer 2000): 287-94.

The author argues that owing to the omnipresence of computers in legal research that law students should first be introduced to online resources, and then print resources afterward. The aim is not to belittle print sources. Rather the author emphasizes that what is most important is inculcating proper' research strategy rather than format. The author responds to old assumptions and raises new issues for teaching legal research.

Rockman, Ilene F. "More Than Faculty Training: Integrating Information Competence into the Disciplines." *College & Research Library News* 61.3 (March 2000): 192-4.

With the goal to ensure that all students are information literate, the authors conducted a week-long summer workshop for faculty to enable them to systematically integrate library skills into the classroom curriculum. Fourteen faculty members attended the workshop. Morning sessions consisted of lectures covering principles of information competence, stimulating student curiosity, adult learning theory, student-centered interface design, determining the literacy components in different disciplines and problem-based learning. In the afternoon sessions, faculty members worked with subject specialist librarians to revise a course syllabus, reshape an assignment or design teaching materials according to their information competencies. On the last day, each faculty member presented a "before" and "after" assignment, explaining the integration of information competencies. URLs at the end of the article provide links to the overview, information competencies and schedule of the program.

Van Ullen, Mary K.; LaFond, Deborah M. "Promoting European Union Depository Collections in the United States through Bibliographic Instruction." *Journal of*

Government Information: An International Review of Policy, Issues and Resources 27.3 (May 2000): 325-343.

This is an excellent inquiry into a rarely covered subject, European Union (EU) depository collections. The article examines the use of instruction in publicizing this often neglected collection. Fifty-five EU depositories were surveyed about their bibliographic instruction offerings, the use of the collection, the EU reference collection, and other promotional efforts. The majority of respondents claimed the most important concept they taught was the structure and function of the EU including the legislative process, and the history and nature of documents. Other respondents indicated they often spent valuable time teaching basic research skills, and hence had to gloss over key concepts. Overall, the librarians highlighted the difficulties of teaching and promoting this valuable albeit complex resource.

Wien, Charlotte. "Teaching Online Information Retrieval to Students at Two Danish Universities." *Aslib Proceedings* 52.1 (January 2000): 39-47.

With the addition of a new school of journalism, librarians and faculty at the University of Southern Denmark knew that their students should have training that incorporated information research concepts and skills. In designing the class, major Danish newspapers were surveyed to learn what resources and assistance was available to their journalists. After analyzing the results and examining available resources, it was decided to focus on basic theoretical problems involved in information retrieval and how to express an information need. This article provides a nice overview of the current information literacy efforts outside the U.S. Moreover, it furnishes a convenient blueprint for getting journalism students started on the right path towards information literacy.

Willingham, Taylor. "Real World to Classroom and Back: Confessions of a Reluctant Instructor." *American Libraries* 31.6 (June/July 2000): 70-2.

The article describes the author's experience of having taught a course in library literacy for the library science program at San Jose State. The author has a somewhat unusual background in that she possesses an MBA as opposed to a degree in library science, yet it is clear from her students' enthusiastic response that her educational background was not an issue. A significant portion of the course was devoted to fieldwork and real-world scenarios, which the author emphasizes, was the course's strongest selling point. She also makes it clear that those who adopt library literacy as a career face many challenges. Another nice aspect of the article is that it applies to all library types.