LIRT News

LIRT's Top Twenty for 2002

Selected and reviewed by the Continuing Education Committee: Terri Holtze, Camille McCutcheon, Jim Millhorn, Frances Nadeau (Chair,) and Ericka Raber.

This year marked the first time that virtual members participated in reading, evaluating and selecting LIRT's Top Twenty Committee members reviewed over eighty articles relating to information literacy and library instruction. At ALA Midwinter, three members met to select the final Top Twenty. The committee tried to include articles from school, special and public libraries; from countries other than the United States; from differing points of view on a variety of subjects; and from a variety of journals. Articles from public libraries eluded us. The prominent topic was assessment as instruction librarians analyzed the impact of their teaching on student learning. Although one-fourth of our selections came from The Journal of Academic Librarianship, we believe these articles explore a variety of issues relevant to all library instruction programs.

Arp, Lori; Woodard, Beth S. "Recent Trends in Information Literacy and Instruction."
Reference & User Service Quarterly 42.2 (Winter 2002): 124- 132.

> The article announces the resurrection of the former "Library Literacy" column after a five-year hiatus. The authors make up for lost time by examining the five most prominent themes to emerge in information literacy in the last five years. The themes are well-considered and include: emergence of numerous standards and guidelines; changing definitions of information literacy; rise of plagiarism, questions of copyright and ethical use of information; impact of the digital age on teaching and learning; and emergence of new teaching methods and technological delivery of instruction.

Bodi, Sonia. "How Do We Bridge the Gap Between What We Teach and What They Do? Some Thoughts on the Place of Questions in the Process of Research." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 28.3 (May 2002): 109-14.

> In this article, Bodi explores and lists questions that can serve as a research model because she believes that "knowing how to shape a topic and translate it into search terms" forms the basis for research. This research model may assist students with their research because many students lack the scholarly skills such as knowing the research in the field or taking the time to reflect on their research strategy. The model may also bridge the gap between the interactive searching

done by students, in the electronic environment, and the step-by-step, linear teaching of many instruction librarians.

Cain, Amanda. "Archimedes, Reading, and the Sustenance of Academic Research Culture in Library Instruction." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 28.3 (May 2002): 115-121.

In this article, Amanda Cain suggests that leisure, reflection and creativity should be reintroduced to undergraduate students as part of library instruction. Cain laments the lack of leisure for both faculty and students; and she believes that library instruction must encompass more than assessing research competencies and teaching database search strategy. Using the story of Archimedes, Cain demonstrates that reading books and reflecting on that reading, has formed the basis for scholarly research throughout history.

Carter, Elizabeth W. "'Doing the Best You Can with What You Have': Lessons Learned From Outcomes Assessment." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 28.1/2 (Jan/Mar 2002): 36-41.

This article discusses the assessment techniques developed to evaluate the learning of Citadel students in three courses: a Psychology course co-developed by Psychology and Library-faculty; and the freshman library instruction course and its later incarnation Citadel 101. The focus is on the assessment techniques for determining student learning and attitudes as a result of the course, including the use of free-response pre and post-tests scored with a double-blind system.

Churkovich, Marion; Oughtred, Christine. "Can an Online Tutorial Pass the Test for Library Instruction? An Evaluation and Comparison of Library Skills Instruction Methods for First Year Students at Deakin University. Smart Searcher versus Face-to-Face Instruction." *Australian Academic & Research Libraries* 33.1 (Mar. 2002): 25-38.

Churkovich and Oughtred assess and compare the acquisition of basic search skills among three student groups: one that used an online tutorial, one taught with traditional lecture style, and one that used a combination of both. The pre- and post-test instruments consisted of demographic and attitudinal questions, and a set of multiple choice questions to measure skill levels. They conclude that personal contact provided the best learning outcomes and confidence in the participating students.

Cothey, Vivian. "A Longitudinal Study of World Wide Web Users' Information-Searching Behavior." *Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology* 53.2 (Jan. 15, 2002): 67-78.

With this article, Cothey investigates the web-searching behavior of students and how it changes with experience. She gathered data over a10-month period that tracked the web usage of 206 students by keeping a transaction log of all URLs accessed by each of the students. This study had interesting and unexpected results.

Dunn, Kathleen K. "Assessing Information Literacy Skills in the California State University: A Progress Report." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 28.1/2 (Jan./March 2002): 26-35.

This article discusses the multi-year assessment of information literacy skills at California State University. Dunn outlines the history of the CSU multi-year assessment plan; defines information competence; describes the three phases of the assessment strategy; and provides her impressions about assessing information competence. In addition to relating what the accomplishments of the project have been so far, Dunn also addresses the future plans of the assessment project and includes representative data from the study's first phase and a sample of findings from the preliminary analysis of the data from the second phase.

Durisin, Patricia, ed. "Information Literacy Programs: Successes and Challenges." *Journal of Library Administration* 36.1/2 (2002): entire issue.

An entire issue of this journal is devoted to the successes and challenges of several, varied information literacy programs in academic libraries. Common themes discussed in the issue include collaboration, assessment, teaching methods, learning styles, and information literacy standards.

Emmons, Mark; Martin, Wanda. "Engaging Conversation: Evaluating the Contribution of Library Instruction to the Quality of Student Research." *College & Research Libraries* 63.6 (Nov. 2002): 545-560.

The authors (University of New Mexico) detail a collaborative project between the library and the English department. The goal was to develop a rigorous set of measures in order to assess the move from a tool-oriented instruction session to an information literacy program focused on inquiry and critical thinking skills. Librarians reviewed more than 250 papers covering a span of ten semesters. What they found was that the transition from one teaching platform to another sparked only a slight increase in students' use of scholarly sources. Although both parties were mildly disappointed with the results, the assessment gave them a positive direction to shoot for and highlighted the common interests of librarians

and English instructors. The assessment also underlined the need for even more intensive collaboration between the departments.

Frantz, Paul Allen. "A Scenario-based Approach to Credit Course Instruction. Library Research Course at the University of Oregon." *Reference Services Review* 30.1 (2002): 37-42.

Frantz presents a scenario-based approach to a library credit course that integrates into its syllabus real-life situations based on encounters with students at the reference desk. Taught at the University of Oregon, this course, entitled LIB 101—Library Research Methods meets weekly; and library concepts and skills that apply to the real-life scenarios are addressed. Weekly assignments are given to reinforce the scenarios covered during class. In the article, Frantz summarizes ten scenarios used in the credit course and includes advantages and disadvantages of the scenario-based approach along with evaluations from students who had completed the course.

Gordon, Carol A. "A Room with a View: Looking at School Library Instruction from a Higher Education Perspective." *Knowledge Quest* 30.4 (Mar/April 2002): 16-21.

Gordon discusses a survey taken by graduate students, which indicates that respondents had not retained information searching skills. Questions from the first part of Gordon's survey address skills that students more than likely learned in K-12 school library media programs. In the article, she also examines five undergraduate research assignments in order to determine which information skills college students need to know. She concludes that school library media programs can prepare students conceptually by creating opportunities for learners to go beyond the mechanics of searching and reporting to practice the skills and thinking processes of the researcher.

Grafstein, Ann. "A Discipline-based Approach to Information Literacy." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 28.4 (July 2002): 197-204.

In her article, Grafstein supports the concept of a disciplined-based approach to information literacy. She presents an historical context of librarians and information literacy and argues that librarians and teaching faculty share the responsibility for teaching information literacy. Grafstein states that, based upon their credentials and expertise, librarians and teaching faculty should teach the skills that each is best qualified to teach.

Harada, Violet H. "Personalizing the Information Search Process: A Case Study of Journal Writing With Elementary-Age Students." (Computer File) *School Library Media Research* 5 (2002).

This article offers a report of a case study supported by a 1999 AASL/Highsmith Research Award. The field-based research focused on the effects of journal writing on elementary students' cognitive and affective awareness of the information search process. Journal entries were coded based on their level of cognitive or affective responses.

Jacobson, Trudi E.; Xu, Lijuan. "Motivating Students in Credit-based Information Literacy Courses: Theories and Practice." *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 2.3 (July 2002): 423-441.

The authors (University of Albany) detail their experience in developing a semester length information literacy course. It is argued that the program's key to success is founded on properly motivating students. Borrowing from the pedagogical theory of John M. Keller, the authors assert that motivation revolves around four key factors (ARCS): attention, relevance, confidence and satisfaction. The body of the article addresses practical ways in which instructors can enhance intrinsic motivation while paying tribute to ARCS.

Marcum, James W. "Rethinking Information Literacy." *The Library Quarterly* 72.1 (Jan. 2002): 1-26.

This article discusses information literacy as a central purpose for academic librarians, critiques the underlying assumptions of the information literacy model, and suggests that information literacy be re-conceptualized to stress learning and sociotechnical fluency.

O'Connor, Lisa G.; Radcliff, Carolyn J.; Gedeon, Julie A. "Applying Systems Design and Item Response Theory to the Problem of Measuring Information Literacy Skills." *College & Research Libraries* 63.6 (Nov. 2002): 528-543.

These authors describe developing an assessment instrument designed to link information literacy skills to student learning. After reviewing other tests, the authors developed their own, which they named SAILS (Standardized Assessment of Information Literacy Skills.) In order to create a test credible enough to compete for limited university funding, they involved an expert in testing, reviewed the questions in small groups, and carefully considered the placement of the questions. Although the test itself is not provided, many questions are shared, as is the URL for the SAILS web site.

Rader, Hannelore B. "Teaching and Assessing Information Skills in the Twenty-first Century: A Global Perspective." *Library Trends* 51:2 (Fall 2002): entire issue.

These articles examine some of the best practices for teaching information literacy and the assessment strategies used to measure their impact on student learning. Authors from China and South Africa review the latest information literacy initiatives in their respective countries. From the Netherlands, is an article describing the difficulties that mature users encounter with the Internet, even though they are proficient with the subject. The articles describing United States universities focus on the partnerships with subject faculty. In the final article, Rader summarizes information literacy since 1973 and includes URLs for exemplary model programs.

Seamans, Nancy H. "Student Perceptions of Information Literacy: Insights for Librarians." *Reference Services Review* 30.2 (2002): 112-123.

In order to improve library instruction for first-year students, Nancy Seamans studied how students acquire and use information. She studied nine students via survey, electronic dialogue, and individual interviews. Seamans organizes the results by themes: consulting with others; search strategies; focusing the information; legal and ethical issues; prior skills information; evaluating information; and evaluating Internet resources. She also includes actual statements by the students. Not only enjoyable to read, these student quotes illustrate how students approach research. Using these themes, Seamans summarizes the implications and relevance for library personnel who teach first-year students.

Suarez, Doug. "Designing the Web Interface for Library Instruction Tutorials Using Dreamweaver, Fireworks, and Course-builder." *Information Technology and Libraries* 21.3 (Sept. 2002): 129-134.

This is a nuts-and-bolts article about what the neophyte can expect to encounter when delving into a suite of web-authoring tools. The author does not offer a manual on the workings of each program, but rather outlines a set of hurdles that must be overcome to effectively employ the programs. The article is written in a brisk, nontechnical style that emphasizes forethought and planning as opposed to embedded knowledge. Although the author attempts to play down the intimidation factor involved in acquiring web-authoring skills, the overall impression is that a sharp learning curve must take hold in order to implement these programs.

Tennant, Michele R.; Miyamoto, Michael M. "The Role of Medical Libraries in Undergraduate Education: A Case Study in Genetics at the University of Florida." *Journal of the Medical Library Association* 90.2 (April 2002): 181-193.

This article offers a model for course-integrated instruction. The idea for the project originated with a professor of zoology (the second author, Professor Miyamoto) who wanted to enhance the research and critical thinking element in an upper-level genetics course. Instead of assigned readings, he wanted students to conduct their own research on medical and genetics databases focused on a designated genetic disorder. Librarians played a key role in the project as they offered instruction and support for the students throughout the process. The authors furnish a detailed account of their collaboration and the success of the project. A number of students found the intensive exploration of databases not only profitable, but also greatly enhanced their appreciation of the practice of scientific research.