

LIRT News

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LIRT's Top Twenty 2003

Selected and reviewed by the Continuing Education Committee: Tiffany Anderson, Terri Holtze, Camille McCutcheon, Jim Millhorn, Harry Meserve, Frances Nadeau, Ericka Arvidson Raber (Chair), Deva Reddy, and Leslie Sult.

Committee members reviewed over one hundred articles related to information literacy and library instruction. The committee worked to include articles from various library settings.

In addition to the articles presented below, the Committee would like to call attention to the "Research Agenda for Library Instruction and Information Literacy," published by the ACRL Instruction Section's Research and Scholarship Committee. Revised from the 1980 Research Agenda for Bibliographic Instruction, the new agenda identifies important areas needing research attention and presents questions devised to spark ideas for new research. The agenda is available in C&RL News (vol. 64, no.2, pp. 108-13) and online at

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrlbucket/is/iscommittees/webpages/research/researchagendalibrary.htm>

Brown, Janis F., and Janet L. Nelson. "Integration of Information Literacy into a Revised Medical School Curriculum." *Medical Reference Services Quarterly* 22.3 (2003): 63-74.

This article details the active role that librarians have taken in shaping and participating in the medical school curriculum. First- and second-year medical students complete year-long projects. For first-year students the project requires retrieving the comprehensive body of literature on a particular topic; second-year students complete a research project.

Callister, Paul Douglas. "Beyond Training: Law Librarianship's Quest for the Pedagogy of Legal Research Education." *Law Library Journal* 95.1 (2003): 7-45.

Callister makes a convincing case for the use of pedagogical frameworks in legal research education. The author believes that pedagogical frameworks provide law librarians and law students with a means of moving beyond the mere "training" of legal research skills towards a more comprehensive "education" in the methods of solving a wide variety of real-world legal research problems. Although the article

focuses on educating law students, the frameworks that the author proposes can be adapted to a wide variety of audiences.

Carr, Jo Ann, and Ilene F. Rockman. "Information-Literacy Collaboration: A Shared Responsibility." *American Libraries* 34.8 (2003): 52-54.

Carr and Rockman bring attention to an issue crucial to the successful integration of first-year students into the university: what high school students need to know in order to succeed. The article discusses collaborative initiatives between university librarians and school media specialists and compares the information literacy standards of the American Association of School Librarians with those of the Association of College and Research Libraries.

"Characteristics of Programs of Information Literacy that Illustrate Best Practices: A Guideline." *College & Research Libraries News* 64.8 (2003): 544-547.

These guidelines, prepared by the ACRL's Institute for Information Literacy, should be required reading for anyone working on the development or assessment of an information literacy program. The list provides an ideal or benchmark goal for such programs in regards to: Mission; Goals and Objectives; Planning; Administrative and Institutional Support; Articulation with the Curriculum; Collaboration; Pedagogy; Staffing; Outreach; and, Assessment/Evaluation.

Davis, Philip M. "Effect of the Web on Undergraduate Citation Behavior: Guiding Student Scholarship in a Networked Age." *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 3.1 (2003): 41-51.

Davis tracks students' citation behavior from 1996 to 2001 for a research assignment in a microeconomics course at Cornell University. The author discusses how the students' citations were coded, based on the type of reference used, and how the Internet citations were verified for accuracy and persistence. Davis provides some observations from the study, including what types of sources students cited in their papers and the distribution of citations among books and journal articles, etc. In 2001, after faculty became concerned about the lack of scholarly sources that the students had been citing in their bibliographies, guidelines for acceptable sources were incorporated into the research assignment. After incorporation of the guidelines, book and journal citations increased while Internet and newspaper citations decreased. Davis concludes by discussing the importance of faculty providing research parameters for their assignments.

Elmborg, James K. "Information Literacy and Writing Across the Curriculum: Sharing the Vision." *Reference Services Review* 31.1 (2003): 68-80.

Elmborg discusses similarities and differences between writing instruction and library instruction and contends that by the mid-1980s, writing programs were coming into their own, while library instruction programs were still testing the waters. He gives a historical overview of Writing across the Curriculum (WAC) and explains that to be successful WAC programs are initiated and supported through workshops which are conducted by faculty committed to the writing programs. Elmborg also argues that assessment of WAC programs is best administered, not by standardized tests, but at the local level where data can be used to improve both the writing program and the institution. The author suggests that as librarians develop discipline-based information literacy courses, they should consider incorporating components of WAC programs that have proven to be successful.

Flaspohler, Molly R. "Information Literacy Program Assessment: One Small College Takes the Big Plunge." *Reference Services Review* 31.2 (2003): 129-140.

This article addresses the problems inherent in assessing the information literacy program at a small college. It compares the formative, "student self-assessment of satisfaction," type of survey with more summative measures of student abilities to do research. Flaspohler proposes an assessment tool combining both formative and summative evaluations in order to test the abilities of first-year students in the context of a first-year "writing and speaking" course. This required working with faculty members to articulate information literacy goals for the course and to assess its success through bibliographic analysis, an Information Literacy questionnaire, and an in-class "start/stop" writing exercise.

Hall, Patrick. "Developing Research Skills in African American Students: A Case Note." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 29.3 (2003): 182-188.

Hall addresses the special challenges that African American students face in the development of information competence skills at college, highlighting the effects of inadequate pre-college education with regard to research skills, creation of citations and bibliographies, and critical thinking. The article introduces the concept of research mentoring as a necessary element in effective instruction; that the teacher-student interaction is strongly relational as well as content driven. Hall argues that many African American students come from an environment that promotes a cognitive style that is different from mainstream students, more relational and less independent and "objective." It describes how the Research Assistance Program (RAP) helps African American students to develop research, searching, and critical thinking skills.

Halttunen, Kai. "Students' Conceptions of Information Retrieval: Implications for the Design of Learning Environments." *Library & Information Science Research* 25.3 (2003): 307-332.

Halttunen provides an in-depth examination of the need to consider students' preconceived notions about retrieving information and how to use that consideration when designing library instruction. She conducted a study using student essays and responses to questionnaires to determine different ways that students perceive the information retrieval process. Additionally, Halttunen sets forth five instructional design principles to use in a constructivist approach that will take these different student perceptions into account.

Harris, Frances Jacobson. "Information Literacy in School Libraries: It Takes a Community." *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 42.3 (2003): 215-223.

This article addresses the special perspectives required of school librarians with regard to developing programs to address Information Literacy skills in grades K-12. Information Literacy at this level is a "teaching transaction," where working with students means primarily defining the information need and only then trying to find the information itself. The article describes the setting for the work of school librarians, the training which they receive, the process of accreditation, and the structure of educational program standards for specific subjects. The author makes the point that information literacy and critical thinking skills have to be integrated into the curriculum at each level of K-12 schools, and they highlight the National Library Power Program (1988-1998) and its role in integrating information competence into school curricula. The conclusion - that "it takes a community" - is a generalized way of indicating the complexity and promise of present efforts to introduce information literacy at precollege levels of education.

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Hinchliffe, Lisa Janicke, et al. "Examining the Context: New Voices Reflect on Information Literacy." *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 42.4 (2003): 311-317.

After an introduction that briefly examines the concept of "information literacy across the lifespan," Hinchliffe turns to four former students who offer their individual perspectives on information literacy within different library settings. Because each author focuses on a particular context, the reader is exposed to views of information literacy in public, K-12, academic, and special libraries and gains a better sense of the ways that different types of libraries depend on one another to contribute to the development of information literacy skills.

Hricko, Mary. "Using the Invisible Web to Teach Information Literacy." *Journal of Library Administration* 37.3-4 (2002): 379-86.

Hricko describes her method of using the Invisible Web to teach novice researchers about the organization of information on the Internet. Hricko discusses the strengths of the Invisible Web, and why students need to learn about it. Finally, she outlines each of the five ACRL competency standards for information literacy, and then provides examples for addressing them by teaching aspects of the Invisible Web.

Hurlbert, Janet, McNeil, Cathleen R. Savidge, and Georgia R. Laudenslager. "Process-Based Assignments: How Promoting Information Literacy Prevents Plagiarism." *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 10.1 (2003): 39-51.

The authors argue that the proliferation of information sources has led to a diminution of student research skills. In particular, plagiarism has been on the upswing due to the ease of access to materials, and the ability to quickly cut-and-paste text. This trend can be circumvented by reemphasis on broadening information literacy skills and by instituting process based assignments. In practice the latter involves doing assignments in stages where there is repeated evaluation and assessment throughout the course of the project. This naturally involves closer interaction between students and faculty and students and librarians. In other words, this method of conducting research assignments is labor-intensive for all parties. On the other hand, the students are rewarded with a much richer educational and intellectual experience.

Issues in Science & Technology Librarianship no. 37 (2003).

The theme of this issue is information literacy and the sciences. The subjects of the articles range from bioinformatics to engineering to the physical sciences and to distance education. Although each of the articles stands well on its own, the overall impression is that science and technology librarians are engaged in sophisticated and demanding work. In particular, there is a solid agreement that science and technology librarians must impart rigor to their students' searching skills. There is a consensus throughout that there are no short-cuts in science and technical fields for well-structured and highly articulated searches. One of the authors could be speaking for all her colleagues when she states: "As chemical information lies at the heart of chemical research, a working chemist needs to have a thorough understanding of its organization and modes of access."

Lloyd, Anne-maree. "Information Literacy: the Meta-competency of the Knowledge Economy? An Exploratory Paper." *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science* 35.2 (2003): 87-92.

This article presents the ideas that information literacy enables individuals to perceive their information environment, and that it is a meta-competency required of effective employees in today's workplace. Lloyd argues that librarians need to have an understanding of the diversity of workplace contexts in order to ensure individuals are able to develop transferable information literacy skills at a proficient level. Lloyd concludes with a call for partnerships between academia, business, and industry to create information literacy training programs.

Lombardo, Shawn V., and Cynthia E Miree. "Caught in the Web: The Impact of Library Instruction on Business Students' Perceptions and Use of Print and Online Resources." *College & Research Libraries* 64.1 (2003): 6- 22.

Realizing that students prefer the Web or full-text databases to print resources and that the trend to exclusive use of Web resources is a concern, these authors undertook a study with pre-instruction and post-instruction questionnaires to discover if library instruction could improve students' attitudes toward the use of print resources. The study measured students' perception and use of the Web, online bibliographic and full-text databases, and print reference resources. Numerous tables provide statistical analysis and an overview of the questionnaires. Results indicate that students have a more favorable attitude toward print resources and are more likely to use them in their research after library instruction.

Riddle, John S. "Where's the Library in Service Learning?: Models for Engaged Library Instruction." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 29. 2 (2003): 71-81.

Riddle discusses the definition and salient features of service learning. He then recognizes the possible impact of service learning on libraries with two potential responses named alternatively the Thin and Thick response. Using the Thick response, Riddle suggests three theoretical models each advancing the importance of library instruction within service learning pedagogy: a Learning Process Model, a Course Objectives Model, and a Subject Content Model.

Saunders, E. Stewart. "The Effect of Bibliographic Instruction on the Demand for Reference Services." *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 3.1 (2003): 35-39.

Saunders hypothesizes that students receiving library instruction will be more self-reliant and therefore less prone to avail the services of the reference department. In order to test this proposition, the author analyses data of eighty-

three ARL academic libraries over a six-year period. Based on the results, Saunders concludes that bibliographic instruction increases the demand for reference service.

Snavey, Loanne L., and Carol A. Wright. "Research Portfolio Use in Undergraduate Honors Education: Assessment Tool and Model for Future Work" *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 29.5 (2003): 298-303.

Snavey and Wright discuss Pennsylvania State University's Library Studies 301H, a credit course, which is one of the ways that the libraries support thesis research for honors students. The authors share both the goals of the course and its challenges and describe the rationale for incorporating the portfolio as an instrument for authentic assessment. Snavey and Wright give advantages for using the portfolio as an assessment tool and as a model for research. They also describe the two phases of the research portfolio along with its fundamental elements and conclude by explaining how using portfolios make the research process more visible to both faculty and honors students.

Warner, Dorothy Anne. "Programmatic Assessment: Turning Process into Practice by Teaching for Learning." *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 29.3 (2003): 169-176.

This article is the result of a study conducted at Ridder University in Lawrenceville, New Jersey. The study developed out of a realization that a more objective method of assessing student learning was needed in order to better evaluate the effectiveness of library instructional programs. Before undertaking this study, students' impressions of library sessions were the primary means of gathering data on program effectiveness. While useful in some contexts, impressionistic data did little to assist librarians in determining specific ways that the library's instructional program could be improved. Librarians used ACRL's Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education to craft learning objectives. Assessment tools as well as results are shared.