

## **LIRT News**

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### LIRT's Top Twenty for 2006

Selected and reviewed by the LIRT Top 20 Committee: Laura Dale Bischof; Dr. Linda Colding; Susanna Cowan; Kate Gronemyer; Tiffany Anderson Hebb; Corliss Lee; Mary Jo Lyons; Camille McCutcheon (Chair); James Rhoades; Leslie Sult; Esteban Valdez; and Teri B. Weil.

Committee members reviewed over 150 articles relating to library instruction and information literacy. At ALA Midwinter, seven members met to select the top twenty articles which provide a mixture of practical and theoretical perspectives from a variety of library environments.

Baker, Laura. "Library Instruction in the Rearview Mirror: A Reflective Look at the Evolution of a First-Year Library Program Using Evidence-Based Practice." *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 13.2 (2006): 1–20.

The librarians at Abilene Christian University were looking at ways to improve their library instruction efforts aimed at students enrolled in the freshman seminar course. Baker describes how, over eight years, they continued to examine the course and alter the information literacy unit, using evidence-based methods. She describes three approaches they tried—a scavenger hunt, a simulated research model, and a course-integrated mini-research project—and talks about what they learned, including successes and failures. After each analysis, they look at how this new knowledge should impact their future decisions with regard to library instruction for these students.

Desai, Christina M., and Stephanie J. Graves. "Instruction via Instant Messaging Reference: What's Happening?" *The Electronic Library* 24.2 (2006): 174–89.

This article analyzes IM reference in the context of information literacy instruction. Following a study of the presence of "instruction" in IM reference interactions, the authors argue that instruction should remain a key element of reference help even when offered virtually. This article asks and answers some important questions about IM reference and will contribute to the ongoing debates about IM reference as an effective tool for researchers and librarians.

Dickinson, Gail K. "The Spirit of Inquiry in Information Literacy." *Teacher Librarian* 34.2 (2006): 23–27.

Dickinson compares the American Association of School Librarians' (AASL) information literacy standards to the theories of John Dewey. This comparison is useful because Dewey's theories are likely to resonate with classroom teachers and can provide a theoretical platform for information literacy. Dickinson begins with a concise overview of Dewey's theories and briefly discusses some of the common misinterpretations. She then relates his theories to the general concept of information literacy and to the specific information literacy standards approved by the AASL. While the AASL standards are aimed at K-12 librarians/media specialists, Dickinson's interpretation of Dewey will be useful to librarians at all levels who are interested in collaborative teaching and in the integration of information literacy into the curriculum.

Elmborg, James. "Critical Information Literacy: Implications for Instructional Practice." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 32.2 (2006): 192–99.

This article places "information literacy" in the context of wider theoretical approaches to literacy theory. Although much has been written on both fields independently, little literature aligns the more specialized literacy with the general field—something Elmborg identifies as a missing and essential element in information literacy discussions. This is a very important contribution to information literacy efforts, one that will broaden future discussions and will prevent library instruction practitioners from simply continuing down the same much-worn paths in their teaching methods.

Harada, Violet H. "Building Evidence Folders for Learning through Library Media Centers." *School Library Media Activities Monthly* 23.3 (2006): 25–30.

Harada describes a pilot project to help school librarians develop evidence folders. These folders focus on assessment of student performance and can be used to communicate to administrators what students learn through the library media center. They can also be used in exchanging ideas with other librarians and in critiquing each other's work. Harada describes the reflective process of an outcome-focused examination of instruction and provides details concerning the contents of the folders.

Holliday, Wendy, and Britt Fagerheim. (2006) "Integrating Information Literacy with a Sequenced English Composition Curriculum." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 6.2 (2006): 169–84.

Holliday and Fagerheim describe the process taken at their library to implement an organized information literacy plan for two sequential English courses. Their needs assessment to see what research skills really gave students the most trouble highlighted a gap between what librarians and faculty had previously

emphasized (tools such as databases) and what students needed (skills such as focusing a topic and evaluating sources). Librarians and English faculty were surveyed concerning which of the ACRL Information Literacy standards were best suited to be taught in the two core English classes. Based on these surveys and a close working relationship with the English faculty, the librarians developed a curriculum with specific learning objectives and activities for each class. They built in some flexibility for the advanced class, since the general course is less structured. They also describe how they are assessing these changes in their program.

Islam, Ramona L., and Lisa Anne Murno. "From Perceptions to Connections: Informing Information Literacy Program Planning in Academic Libraries through Examination of High School Library Media Center Curricula." *College & Research Libraries* 67.6 (2006): 492–514.

Islam and Murno share findings from a twenty question survey that they developed and distributed to high school librarians across the United States. The survey resulted from the authors' desire to gain a greater understanding of the depth and breadth of the information literacy instructional activities being carried out in high schools across the country. The survey asked School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) to respond to questions in the following four categories: the "information literacy skills most and least addressed by SLMS; SLMS' perceptions of students' overall information literacy competencies; hindrances to optimal information literacy instruction; and the conduciveness of school library media center environments to information literacy instruction." These survey results can help guide both academic librarians and SLMS in information literacy program planning.

Klusek, Louise, and Jerry Bornstein. "Information Literacy Skills for Business Careers: Matching Skills to the Workplace." *Journal of Business & Finance Librarianship* 11.4 (2006): 3–21.

Klusek and Bornstein suggest information literacy skills are highly valued and recruited in the corporate world, even though employers do not identify with the terminology. To illustrate this, they analyzed twenty-one business and finance occupation profiles included in the Department of Labor's Occupation Information Network (O\*Net) for evidence of information literacy skills. O\*Net's profiles outline all facets of an occupation, including basic skills and abilities required for job success. Up to forty-six skills in each profile can be rated on a five-point scale from "Not Important" to "Extremely Important." Using only the skills rated with an "Important," "Very Important," or "Extremely Important," the authors mapped each profile's essential job skills to analogous Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher

Education. Ten of O\*Net's job skills are easily defined as representative of the ACRL standards. Using these skills as placeholders for the standards, over ninety percent of the occupation profiles rated information literacy as "Important," or "Very Important," thus confirming information literacy as a highly valued competency in business. The results also hinted that higher order information literacy skills, such as critical thinking and evaluating information, may carry greater weight for employers than lower order information literacy skills. Klusek and Bornstein conclude that a successful college curriculum must go beyond course content and address the information skills necessary to succeed in the workplace.

Knight, Lorrie A. "Using Rubrics to Assess Information Literacy." *Reference Services Review* 34.1 (2006): 43–55.

Knight discusses an assessment project that uses a scoring rubric to evaluate first-year students' mastery of course and information literacy objectives. Knight's own participation in an assessment workshop for librarians that is funded by an Institute of Museum and Library Science (IMLS) grant led to the article. Using rubrics to assess student learning was part of the workshop curriculum and ultimately became the inspiration for the project. Building on lessons learned from an earlier pilot project, Knight worked with first-year seminar faculty to finalize the goals of the assessment project: to measure student achievement of course objectives; to analyze use of web sites and scholarly sources; to correlate scores with learning environment; and to flesh out opportunities for instructional improvement. To create the rubric, Knight correlated course learning objectives with the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. She assigned three levels of performance (Beginning, Proficient, and Advanced) to each learning objective. While students scored well overall and met the objectives, evidence pointed to deficiencies in critical evaluation and in consistent documentation. These results generated several critical revisions to the library's information literacy tutorial. Knight concluded that her rubric worked well as a tool for authentic assessment of information literacy and helped to articulate clear performance expectations with students. It also served as a technique for evaluating instructional methods and as a bridge linking her to the faculty.

Matoush, Toby Leigh. "New Forms of Information Literacy." *Reference Services Review* 34.1 (2006): 156–63.

Matoush describes current and future "innovative" information literacy programs at the King Library, a joint academic (San Jose State University, SJSU) and public library (San Jose Public Library) in California. Public and academic librarians work together in the merged departments of reference, access

services, technical services, and information technology. Aided by grants from the California State University system, the SJSU instructional staff has developed new information literacy tools. In addition to classroom instruction, the library offers general and subject-specific online tutorials. The information literacy skills of incoming students are assessed using the “Stairway to Success” online tutorial, and students taking part in freshman learning communities are urged to complete tutorials on plagiarism and basic research skills. Future information initiatives include the integration of information literacy activities in the new dormitories at SJSU and active outreach to local community colleges whose students benefit from the joint public/academic library environment at the King Library.

Matthew, Victoria, and Ann Schroeder. “The Embedded Librarian Program: Faculty and Librarians Partner to Embed Personalized Library Assistance into Online Courses.” *EDUCAUSE Quarterly* 29.4 (2006): 61–65.

This article provides practical guidelines and strategies for implementing an embedded librarian program. Matthew, an online instructor, and Schroeder, a librarian, discuss how such a program was established at the Community College of Vermont (CCV). With the rapid growth of online courses, twelve campuses in the CCV system, and only five full-time librarians, the authors collaborated to determine how library instruction could be provided. Working with faculty, a librarian was integrated into online courses through discussion forums in which students’ research questions were answered. Advertising and word of mouth among faculty helped the program grow from two courses in spring semester 2004 to forty-three courses in spring semester 2006. While challenges were encountered, the program worked best when a librarian worked with students on specific research assignments and when faculty reiterated to students the importance of asking a librarian for assistance. A combination of IP videoconferencing and NetMeeting software was another approach to providing library instruction to students at remote sites. Once again, when librarians and teaching faculty work together, students can only benefit.

Maybee, Clarence. “Undergraduate Perceptions of Information Use: The Basis for Creating User-Centered Student Information Literacy Instruction.” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 32.1 (2006): 79–85.

Maybee uses a phenomenographical approach to investigate how undergraduate students conceptualize information use. The results of this study indicate that undergraduates conceptualize information use in three ways: sources, in which “information use is seen as finding information located in information sources;” processes, in which “information use is seen as initiating a process;” and knowledge base, in which “information use is seen as building a personal

knowledge base for various purposes.” The author suggests that recognizing how students experience information use will aid librarians in planning future information literacy instruction sessions.

McGuinness, Claire. “What Faculty Think—Exploring the Barriers to Information Literacy Development in Undergraduate Education.” *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 32.6 (2006): 573–82.

This article examines a cross-section of the resources from a larger study of the impediments to faculty-librarian collaboration for information literacy development (ILD) in post-secondary education conducted in the Republic of Ireland from 1999–2004. McGuinness uses qualitative analysis of comments made by faculty members in sociology and in civil engineering to provide “insight into the perceptions and beliefs of academic faculty with regard to the facilitation of ILD within undergraduate curricula.” She concludes that faculty members do not currently perceive information literacy as a priority and offers suggestions to address this issue.

Moore, Penny. “Information Literacy in the New Zealand Education Sector.” *School Libraries Worldwide* 12.1 (2006):1–21.

Moore provides a thorough examination of the use of information literacy in New Zealand through utilizing the Bruce information literacy relational model. She uses seven concepts to consider how the implementation of information literacy on a national scale has impacted policies, teacher education, and teaching. After examining each facet, she provides an assessment of information literacy in specific areas. The article demonstrates how, if pursued properly, lifelong learning among students can be achieved with the cooperation of multiple agencies. It also provides a template on how information literacy can be integrated across a wide spectrum, e.g., across a university community and campus.

Novotny, Eric, and Ellysa Stern Cahoy. “If We Teach, Do They Learn? The Impact of Instruction on Online Catalog Search Strategies.” *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 6.2 (2006): 155–67.

The authors provide an overview of a study regarding the effectiveness of library instruction in relation to online catalog searching. By analyzing student learning experiences, search strategies, and attention spans, Novotny and Cahoy provide teaching strategies in an effort to assess effective library instruction. They conclude that library instruction does have an impact if implemented properly. The article provides interesting ideas on assessing student perspectives and learning styles in relation to library instruction.

Reed, Shannon L., and Kirilka Stavreva. "Layering Knowledge: Information Literacy as Critical Thinking in the Literature Classroom." *Pedagogy* 6.3 (2006): 435–52.

Written by two literature professors, this article offers an interesting philosophical look at teaching information literacy as an integrated part of literature classes. Throughout the article, the authors construct a coherent and engaging argument for "teaching information literacy as [they] teach writing—as a way of thinking through the problems and questions which students encounter in their lives." Along with addressing philosophical issues, the authors provide sample assignments that can be adapted for other courses or assignments.

Sult, Leslie, and Vicki Mills. "A Blended Method for Integrating Information Literacy Instruction into English Composition Classes." *Reference Services Review* 34.3 (2006): 368–88.

Your resources for instruction are dwindling; at the same time, the phone is ringing off the hook with new requests for instruction. Sound familiar? The authors describe a similar situation they faced, and the strategies they used to develop more effective integrated methods for information literacy. These strategies include true collaborative efforts with in-class instructors to the point of giving the instructors increasing responsibility for incorporating information literacy into their classes. In these cases, librarians train the trainers to instill a modicum of confidence in their abilities to teach the basic tenets of information literacy in their classrooms. An assessment of the model is also discussed.

Sutton, Shan, and Lorrie Knight. "Beyond the Reading Room: Integrating Primary and Secondary Sources in the Library Classroom." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 32.3 (2006): 320–25.

The use of primary sources in research cannot be understated, yet many undergraduate students are unaware of primary sources and do not understand the relationship between secondary and primary sources. The authors rectified this situation by developing a model of collaboration between an instruction librarian and a Special Collections librarian. The Special Collections librarian opens a general library instruction session by defining primary sources and by showing how they relate to secondary sources. The instruction librarian demonstrates how to find and evaluate secondary sources. Students are encouraged to handle materials from Special Collections to reinforce the lessons. An assessment of the model is discussed along with future directions. Guides used in the instruction sessions along with student evaluation forms are appended.

Ward, Dane. "Revisioning Information Literacy for Lifelong Meaning." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 32.4 (2006): 396–402.

This article explores the possibility of a holistic pedagogy of information literacy to develop student learning and thereby develop lifelong learning skills. Ward emphasizes the need to go beyond teaching critical thinking skills as a major component of the information literacy program. Further discussed in this article are approaches to collaboration and the librarian's place in curricular activities.

Willis, Carolyn, and Wm. Joseph Thomas. "Students as Audience: Identity and Information Literacy Instruction." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 6.4 (2006): 431–44.

This article raises critical factors concerning library instruction that need to be included in the planning and implementation of the instruction session. These factors include but are not limited to the background of the student attending the session and the facility that is used to house the library instruction session. Of particular interest are the survey that is used to identify information about students who are attending instruction sessions and the survey results which will have an impact on planning future instruction sessions. Additionally, the pedagogy used to address the learning styles of the students is crucial in the ever-developing library instruction program