

LIRT News

[June 2008](#)

Volume 30, Number 4

LIRT Top Twenty for 2007

Selected and reviewed by the LIRT Top 20 Committee: Susanna Cowan, Kate Gronemyer, Corliss Lee, Mary Jo Lyons, Camille McCutcheon (Co-Chair), James Rhoades, Ru Story-Huffman, Connie Stovall, and Esteban Valdez (Co-Chair).

Committee members reviewed over 300 articles relating to library instruction and information literacy. At ALA Midwinter, Philadelphia, committee members met to select the top twenty articles. Even though the list is weighted heavily towards academic libraries, they all provide a mixture of practical and theoretical perspectives that can be adapted to a variety of library environments.

Albitz, Rebecca S. "The What and Who of Information Literacy and Critical Thinking in Higher Education." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 7.1 (2007): 97-109.

This is an excellent article that approaches the "faculty vs. librarian" dilemma in the context of information literacy. Albitz zeroes in on the "disconnect" that has arisen between two allied yet distinct concepts: "information literacy" and "critical thinking." Albitz argues that a lack of consensus among librarians, faculty members and administrators about where precisely the lines between these concepts can be drawn has resulted in lack of direction regarding which groups (librarians or faculty) are responsible for teaching these critical thinking and/or information literacy skills. Historical hierarchies within the academy trap librarians in a real or perceived subordinate role that prevents them from leading information literacy initiatives at an institutional level. Relying on "collaboration" with faculty often falls short both because information literacy is less meaningful to faculty than "critical thinking" and also because collaborative efforts by faculty usual focus on student-faculty collaboration—librarians rarely enter the picture in educational/pedagogical research. Albitz stops short of offering any definitive solutions, but she does advocate institution-level programs in information literacy education that recognize (and reward) the range of expertise offered by librarians and academic faculty.

Bailin, Alan, and Aisha Peña. "Online Library Tutorials, Narratives, and Scripts." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 33.1 (2007): 106-117.

This is a timely article that discusses the differences between print and online communication—and how these differences need to be addressed as we create online tutorials for information literacy. When we transfer concepts from the

printed page to an online format, we must take into account that both the medium and our users' way of reading change dramatically. The standard "linear" approach to online tutorials (one screen following another in logical sequence) frustrates any user's attempt to move non-linearly through information, yet simply expanding navigation menus within a tutorial can create a link-heaviness—the feelings of being "lost in cyberspace." The authors advocate use of a kind of semantic "script" in which information follows a kind of narrative sequence (or series of parallel sequences), allowing users to locate themselves quickly by anticipating "where" they are headed—and then shortcutting to that information if desired. These scripts often begin with a "what are you looking for" type question that offers several answers/paths. Combining linear sequences with nonlinear choices/links takes into account the complex manner in which most users follow a "scent" to the information they are seeking.

Bennett, Scott. "Campus Cultures Fostering Information Literacy." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 7.2 (2007): 147- 167.

This is an important write-up of data accumulated during the 2004 workshops sponsored by the Council of Independent Colleges and the National Institute for Technology & Liberal Education discussing the correlation between "campus culture" regarding information literacy and the success of information literacy programs. Bennett notes that while "information literacy" has become increasingly important to academic institutions, it is primarily librarians who advocate and take responsibility for teaching it. Librarians remain on the whole relegated to the periphery of curriculum planning at the institutional or departmental level. Faculty, librarians, and technology professionals are all struggling with what information literacy might suggest about who should stand at the head of the classroom and when education must take place outside its traditional spaces. Attendants at the workshops who identified their campuses information literacy efforts as successful all pointed to the importance of high level administrative/programmatic support. Bottom line, as both the workshops and a follow-up study suggested, curricular review/redesign—closely followed by emphasis on undergraduate research and the "library as place"—is essential to the establishment of information literacy at an institutional level.

Clarke III, Irvine, and Theresa Flaherty. "Fostering Information Literacy in the Marketing Curriculum by Engaging Students with Print Marketing Resources." *Marketing Education Review* 17.1 (2007): 79-85.

This article, written by two professors of marketing, describes an assignment that not only requires the use of the library's print marketing resources and incorporates information literacy but also makes use of the marketing concepts students are learning in their junior-level Principles of Marketing class. Students

are asked to select a print marketing resource like the Encyclopedia of Consumer Brands or the Market Share Reporter to learn about their target market and their competitors' products (the materials selected by other teams of students) and to develop advertising materials and sales pitches for their "products." This authentically integrated information literacy exercise has potential for adaptation beyond the marketing classroom.

Davis, Kaetrena D. "The Academic Librarian as Instructor: A Study of Teacher Anxiety." *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 14.2 (2007): 77-101.

Davis reports the result of a study she conducted to analyze teaching anxiety experienced by academic librarians. Though most of the respondents reported enjoying teaching, a large percentage also reported experiencing physical, mental, and/ or emotional symptoms of anxiety connected to teaching. Interestingly, the researcher found that "concerns about faculty perception [of librarianship] have more of an overall impact on teaching anxiety" than other factors like length of service, age, or training.

Dolowitz, David. "The Big E: How Electronic Informaion Can Be Fitted Into the Academic Process." *Journal of Political Science Education* 3.2 (2007): 177-190.

This study done at the University of Liverpool started with surveys of faculty and students in political science; then a group of students were trained in the use of e-technology and their work compared to that of a group of students who had not received the training. The author discusses categories of electronic resources available to undergraduates for research and their appropriateness at different points of the students' careers. The article also includes a survey of the literature on the impact of the Internet on research and writing of Political Science students.

Gibson, Craig. "Information Literacy and IT Fluency: Convergences and Divergences." *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 46.3 (2007): 23-6.

This article addresses the confluence of the terms "information literacy" and "IT fluency" and relates them to Christine Bruce's relational model of information literacy, the Seven Pillars model developed in Great Britain, and the new emerging concept of "information fluency."

Ginns, Paul and Robert Ellis. "Quality in blended learning: Exploring the relationships between on-line and face-to-face teaching and learning." *Internet and Higher Education* 10.1 (2007): 53-64.

This project draws on a large body of research showing that the approaches students take to learning, and the subsequent quality of their learning, is closely related to their perceptions of their learning experience. Recent research has demonstrated that these findings also hold for nonstandard modes of delivery such as distance education using on-line strategies. However, there is currently little research about how predominately campus-based students' experiences of the on-line part of their courses are associated with their experience of the course as a whole. The present study extends previous research into the domain of blended learning by exploring the relationships between student perceptions of the e-Learning environment, approaches to study, and student grades.

Gross, Melissa, and Don Latham. "Attaining Information Literacy: An Investigation of the Relationship between Skill Level, Self-Estimates of Skill, and Library Anxiety." *Library & Information Science Research* 29.3 (2007): 332-53.

Gross and Latham compared freshmen's perceptions of their information literacy skills with the students' results from the Information Literacy Test. The results of this study demonstrated that students overestimated their skill levels, with almost half of the sample testing non-proficient. High school class standing was not predictive of information literacy ability, and they also found as information literacy skills increased, library anxiety decreased.

Head, Alison J. "Beyond Google: How Do Students Conduct Academic Research?" *First Monday* 12.8 (2007). 15 Nov. 2007

Using a survey, student discussion groups, and analyzing students' research assignments, Head and her colleagues collected data on students' research experiences using print and Internet resources. Head contradicts previous research concluding that students are too reliant on the Internet. While still using popular Internet sites like Wikipedia and Google, the majority of the students in the study consulted course materials or the library's website to start their research. In addition to popular sites, they used library databases suggested by librarians and faculty. A myriad of obstacles confronted students, including procrastination, not understanding their assignments, and selecting and evaluating information. Head concludes faculty need to be more explicit in their expectations for research assignments and that one-on-one attention from faculty and librarians will help students select and evaluate the information they find.

Helms-Park, Rena, Pavlina Radia, and Paul Stapleton. "A Preliminary Assessment of Google Scholar as a Source of EAP Students' Research Materials." *Internet and Higher Education* 10.1 (2007): 65-76.

Given that recent studies have shown that undergraduate students' online searches typically yield material that is unsuitable for academic purposes, the authors set out to determine whether using more specialized search engines, e.g., Google Scholar, would lead to qualitative differences in sources found. The research group was composed of second-language students. Students could use Google, Google Scholar, library databases, or print materials. Not surprisingly, results showed significant differences in academic rigor and bias when comparing results generated by Google with results in other search engines. In terms of academic worthiness, there was no significant difference between sources found using Google Scholar and those found using library databases.

Hovde, Karen. "You Can't Get There from Here: Student Citations in an Ephemeral Electronic Environment." *College & Research Libraries* 68.4 (2007): 312-321.

Hovde's study examined citation behavior of freshman English composition students at Northern Illinois University. She investigated approximately 1,500 citations from student bibliographies submitted in 1999 and approximately 2,500 citations submitted in 2004. Citation categories of print sources included books, journals, newspapers, and government documents, while web citations included those to full-text articles from journals, magazines, in the student bibliographies still led to the pages originally referenced. For the web citations submitted in 1999, 38 percent of the links led to the originally cited documents. For those submitted in 2004, 45 percent of them led to the cited documents. Seven years after Hovde analyzed the citations submitted in 1999; she reexamined them and noted that only nine percent of the links now led to the documents initially cited. Hovde provides an analysis of web citations and concludes with a discussion of the potential impact of web citations on future scholarship.

Kraemer, Elizabeth W., Shawn V. Lombardo, and Frank J. Lepkowski. "The Librarian, the Machine, Or a Little of both: A Comparative Study of Three Information Literacy Pedagogies at Oakland University." *College & Research Libraries* 68.4 (2007): 330-42.

Librarians at Kresge Library, Oakland University, discuss the results of a survey comparing three methods, live instruction by a librarian, online instruction using WebCT, and a hybrid of face-to-face instruction and online tutorials, used to teach Rhetoric 160, a first year writing course. Twelve course sections participated in the study, and each section was randomly assigned to receive library instruction using one of the three formats. For purposes of assessment, students who participated in the study also had to complete identical pre-and post-tests. Although the authors noted that students who received the hybrid instruction format showed the greatest improvement in performance, they found

that, regardless of the format, significant improvements in test scores occurred for all students after having received library instruction.

Mizrachi, Diane, and Jaclyn Bedoya. "LITE Bites: Broadcasting Bite-sized Library Instruction." *Reference Services Review* 35.2 (2007): 249-56.

The authors document the innovative technique of video instruction being implemented at UCLA. The article reports how the library in correspondence with the film school have produced a series of short library instructional film parodies, which are based on popular movies. They produced and aired 12 episodes in 2005-2006. The video commercials use "pop culture" to catch students' attention and inform them about library resources. They created parodies of "Dude, Where's My Car" and "Wizard of Oz" to name a few. UCLA Libraries ran a rotation of the videos on the campus television station with mixed success.

Owusu-Ansah, Edward K. "Beyond Collaboration: Seeking Greater Scope and Centrality for Library Instruction." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 7.4 (2007): 415-29.

As the title states, this article goes beyond the concept of librarian as collaborator to librarian as teacher when the topic is information literacy in higher education. Through the use of discipline-based information literacy courses, Owusu-Ansah is an advocate for credit bearing information literacy courses offered and taught by the academic library and librarian. Bringing the teaching role of librarians to the forefront, the article exhibits the importance of the academic library to lifelong learning, institutional and faculty acceptance of the teaching librarian, while making a strong statement on the importance of the academic library's teaching role. Identification of the academic library as a teaching department can lead to survivability and emphasize the role of librarians in course planning, teaching, and curriculum development. Suggesting that the library play a central role in educating students, the author presents a strong argument for librarians wishing to take their information literacy offerings to the next level.

Saunders, Laura. "Regional Accreditation Organizations' Treatment of Information Literacy: Definitions, Collaboration, and Assessment." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 33.3 (2007): 317-26.

Important in the life and sustainability of the university, some higher education accreditation agencies are including tenets of information literacy as stated goals. This article provides a review of all United States accreditation agencies for higher education and suggests a correlation between information literacy and regional and program accreditation. Also highlighted are partnerships between librarians and teaching faculty as a method of meeting the outcomes outlined by

the accreditation agencies. Using the Middle States Commission on Higher Education as a framework for information literacy inclusion, the author provides readers with grounded knowledge for library involvement in the accreditation process.

Sharma, Shikha. "From Chaos to Clarity: Using the Research Portfolio to Teach and Assess Information Literacy Skills." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 33.1 (2007): 127-35.

This article reports on the development and use of a WebCT-based research portfolio in a semester-long information literacy course entitled Google This! The course title is a red herring used to attract the attention of students, who learn IL skills in incremental stages. In addition to clearly defining course objectives and providing a strong argument for a stand-alone course, Sharma makes a case for web-based portfolios for assessment, saying that such portfolios allow for "collection of authentic evidence of student learning over time." Portfolios comprise eight sections, all of which Sharma defines in refreshing detail. Assessment results are given, along with a practical evaluation rubric.

Sonley, Valerie, Denise Turner, and Sue Myer. "Information Literacy Assessment by Portfolio: A Case Study." *Reference Services Review* 35.1 (2007): 41-70.

Within the last few years, Higher Education has seen an increasing demand for assessment through portfolios. At the same, library faculty are investigating ways to reach nontraditional students—like those in this study—most of whom work full-time jobs, attend college part-time, and are older than traditional college freshmen. Drawing upon education literature rather than library literature alone, the authors discuss diagnostic, judgmental, and developmental assessment, and assert that their non-traditional students would benefit less from high-pressure, judgmental assessment, and more from portfolio testing, whereby students encounter the assignment in increments. Doing so allows for selfreflection, and enables instructors to gauge which critical areas need attention. An ample appendix provides concrete details of the portfolio requirements.

Tilley, Carol and Daniel Callison. "New Mentors for New Media: Harnessing the Instructional Potential of Cognitive Apprenticeships." *Knowledge Quest* 35.5 (2007): 26-31.

The authors champion the use of cognitive apprenticeships, a "naturalistic paradigm for teaching and learning," to improve instruction. Like all apprenticeships, mentors guide novices through real world tasks with the goal of giving skills and strategies. Unlike traditional apprenticeships, where the apprentices learn a craft consisting of explicit skills, the skills and knowledge the

mentor shares are mostly tacit. Mentors also recognize that mentees may be more adept in some areas of information technology, such as using social networking tools, tagging, etc. As the sharing of knowledge becomes reciprocal, learning is enhanced.

Trace, Ciaran B. "Information Creation and the Notion of Membership." *Journal of Documentation* 63.1 (2007): 142- 64.

Trace provides rare research for information literacy enthusiasts, using naturalism and ethnomethodology to examine ways people create and use information. Using a Southern California elementary school as a laboratory, the author observes three classrooms with three different teachers, wherein Trace identifies cues pointing to the social construction of document creation. The author supplies commentary on two important concepts at play: stock of knowledge and the hidden curriculum. Both concepts are crucial to the creation of and use of information, and both are learned through social interaction.