DESCRIPTION OF CURRENT INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAM

The current model for the Loras College Library information literacy program consists primarily of required “one-shot” instruction sessions in LIB 100: MOI and LIB 105: College Writing/ENG 111: Critical Writing. Faculty of LIB 110: Public Speaking and LIB 220: Democracy and Global Diversity are emailed at the beginning of each semester to encourage them to schedule a library instruction session, though not every section participates. In addition, students in MOI are required to take an online Library tour and tutorial. Upper-level instruction occurs as requested by faculty, and is usually in the form of a single instruction session. Efforts have been made to promote Library instruction to faculty beyond the first year, and this has been slowly developing. Online tutorials are also created as requested by faculty, or as initiated by librarians.

In 2012, we developed a new Loras College Information Literacy Rubric based on the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education and the AAC&U VALUE Information Literacy Rubric. Using this rubric as a guide, we then identified learning outcomes and skills that students should gain by the time they graduate, and distributed these outcomes across MOI, College/Critical Writing, and upper level courses in a tiered model. The rubric and learning outcomes have been very helpful in shaping our decision making and instructional design for individual courses. However, there is still much to be done with regard to instruction in upper level courses, and assessment of student learning and instructional effectiveness. Our success in mapping learning outcomes and skills to upper level courses within an individual Program—Religious Studies—serves as a model for other Programs in our efforts to expand upper level instruction. Obtaining more complete assessment data and feedback from students and faculty will also help us to develop a program that is most responsive to student needs. Toward this end, we have developed an assessment plan to guide assessment activities, ongoing data gathering, and analysis. While the current library instruction model has increased the number of instruction sessions and students reached over the past several years, for continued growth and development—especially of upper level instruction—the current program should be evaluated and alternative program models investigated.
**Review of Alternative Models**

**Literature Review**

Similar to the upper level curriculum mapping that the Loras College Library has already undertaken, Gamsby (2010), in cooperation with faculty members, identified different research-based courses at each level within a physics program that would be most appropriate for information literacy (IL) instruction. Holliday & Fagerheim (2006) also sought to sequence IL instruction throughout general education and upper division courses, beginning with English composition, by mapping outcomes and skills to individual courses. These mapping projects can assist both assessment and further development of instruction programs, especially within academic disciplines. Harris (2012), in discussing the integration of information literacy across the curriculum, noted the connection between critical thinking and information literacy, which could be helpful for assessment purposes. Sterling Brasley (2007), in a review of UCLA’s information literacy instruction initiative also recommended adopting a sequenced instruction program to improve both librarian and faculty buy-in. While an important first step, identifying everywhere information literacy should be taught may illuminate a rather daunting task. Hunt & Birks (2004) encourage librarians to increase collaboration with faculty whenever possible—since information literacy is “no longer the sole responsibility of the librarian” (32)—and to extend information literacy instruction to faculty professional
development opportunities. Faculty perceptions of library instruction can also play an important part in the frequency of library instruction (Vander Meer, Stable & Sachs, 2012), and in students’ perceptions of relevance (Hopkins & Julian, 2008), so efforts should be made to convey the value and relevance of IL instruction to faculty as well.

Others have noted the futility of attempting to teach everything students would need to know within a one-shot session, and instead putting efforts into teaching the teachers, and providing lesson plans, activities, and online tutorials (see Sult & Mills, 2006, for review; Novotny & Cahoy, 2006). Chalmers (2008) recommends that librarians “cover less, engage students more, make them take responsibility for their own learning, assess often, and make effective use of work groups that allow them to perfect the inter-personal skills necessary for success in today’s professional environments” (34). Hopkins & Julian (2008) make similar recommendations to cover less content (by avoiding repetition of beginner-level skills), increase interaction, teach advanced research skills in upper level, and focus instruction on assignments, not subject areas.

Mery, Newby and Peng (2012) found that while students who attended a one-shot librarian-taught session showed some significant gains, the gains were greater for students who participated in an online, 1-credit, 10-week information literacy class. They also noted that students who received a research assignment and IL instruction from their English Composition instructor as part of their regular coursework showed no significant gains. While it is unclear whether the format (online vs. in-person) of the instruction has an impact, this research suggests that ongoing, multi-session library instruction is more effective than one-shot sessions. This is aligned with much recent literature on library instruction, which focuses on efforts to integrate information literacy within disciplines, composition programs, or individual classes (Gamsby, 2010; Harris, 2012; Helms & Whitesell, 2013; Holliday & Fagerheim, 2006; Simard, 2009; Sult & Mills, 2006; Xiao, 2010), and ensuring that library instruction occurs within the context of course assignments (Mahaffy, 2006).

There are also ways that information literacy can be integrated more seamlessly with classroom instruction. Xiao (2010) proposes that librarians collaborate with faculty within learning management systems, such as Blackboard and Moodle. Xiao’s combination of in-person instruction with online support via posted library resources and discussion board interaction provided an extra layer of as-needed support, as students often have questions after instruction sessions. Simard (2009) found that a learner-centered program that utilized web-based videos to deliver outcomes-based, basic instruction for undergraduates was well received. The learning outcomes in the study were intended to address potential gaps between perceived and actual skills and needs. Similarly, Vander Meer, Perez-Stable & Sachs (2012) found in their exploration of faculty attitudes that “faculty were most interested in shorter, more targeted face-to-face instructional sessions and in asynchronous online instruction, such as tutorials and class guides” (109). The authors also recommend that librarians embed themselves in online course learning management systems (LMSs), and further suggest the creation of a librarian “role” within the LMS which allows interaction with students in discussion forums and the ability to post resources, but which prevents librarians from viewing course grades.

Bruce (2004) recommends the inclusion of “curriculum that provides opportunities for reflection and documentation of learning about effective information practices” (14). Asking learners to
reflect metacognitively is consonant with theories of learning and memory and would potentially enhance learning outcomes (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010). In a similar activity, Choiniski & Emanuel (2006) examined the use of the one-minute paper and accompanying rubric for assessing student learning after “one-shot” library instruction sessions, and found it to be an effective, low-time and low-effort method of assessment.

From this review of recent research on information literacy instruction, successful programs tend to:

- Collaborate closely with faculty
- Sequence instruction within academic programs
- Provide IL faculty development/training opportunities
- Within individual class sessions, cover less content, but engage students more
- Teach IL skills within the context of a course or an assignment
- Whenever possible, distribute instruction over multiple sessions, instead of utilizing the one-shot method
- Utilize technology and web LMSs to provide enhanced support for instruction and online tutorials

**Peer Institutions**

While a literature review can provide direction for future opportunities, it is also important to bear in mind the limited resources of a small, private liberal arts college such as Loras. For this reason, it is valuable to consider the program models currently used by peer institutions.

Luther College’s information literacy program appears to be in conjunction with a center for learning & teaching and information technology center (sessions are sometimes lead by faculty), and consists of the following components:

- Faculty development
  - Brown bag lunches every other week
  - New Faculty Teaching Group every other week
  - Teaching and Technology sessions
- Library instruction (presumably one-shot)
- Product demonstration – 50-60 minutes and often during lunch hour
- Skills training – 50-60 minutes, by request
- Workshops – practice sessions with trainer available
- 1-on-1 sessions
- [Online software training and instructions](#)

Wartburg College’s Information Literacy Across the Curriculum (ILAC) program consists of the following components:

- Five core classes (Inquiry Studies 101, Inquiry Studies 201, English 112, Scientific Reasoning, Religion 101), each with different learning objectives
- IL skills of first-year students are assessed formally in the fall in the 101/SCH 101 class
- Each major has an ILAC strand, which identifies a course-integrated, developmental process by which students achieve information literacy in the discipline

At Grand View University, each department on campus must offer a certain number of courses that have information literacy as a core outcome. At the freshman level, information literacy is taught and assessed primarily through the Core Seminar I course, required for all freshmen. At the
sophomore-junior level, information literacy is taught and assessed through the Core Seminar II course: Global Awareness. In addition, there are also subsequent departmental information literacy courses. The Library also has an embedded librarian program, which is working to integrate information literacy instruction throughout individual majors. Of note: Grand View is attempting to move away from one-shot sessions in multiple first-year courses, and devote more time and energy into this embedded upper level program. In their current model, they have eight modules, four of which are required, four of which are optional.

Drake University also has a list of approved information literacy courses within their curriculum that students must take. In the fall of 2012, the Drake Cowles Library initiated a pilot program with First Year Seminars for 10 faculty instructors. In exchange for a $1,000 financial incentive, faculty added a librarian to their Blackboard course, agreed to have their students take a baseline pre-instruction quiz, attended three meetings, and agreed to have their students attend one library instruction session (with follow-up visits encouraged).

**PROPOSAL FOR FUTURE OF PROGRAM**

While the Loras College Library information literacy instruction program has become stronger, there is still much room for expansion and improvement. We should continue our efforts to map information literacy within individual academic Programs. This will enable us to be more intentional in the content we address in upper level courses, avoiding duplication, and ensuring students are exposed to advanced information literacy skills. Whenever possible, attempts should be made to avoid covering too much content within a single instruction session. Instead, librarians should encourage faculty to schedule a series of shorter sessions or modules, rather than single, 50-minute one-shot sessions, as this has been tied to stronger student learning outcomes (Mery, Newby & Peng, 2012). And of course, to the extent possible, these IL skills should be taught within the context of a specific course or assignment.

Many colleges have instituted for-credit library or linked-credit information literacy courses (see for example, Blakeslee, 1998; Burtle & Sugarman, 2002). While this may not be an option for us right now, further research and inquiries should be made into peer libraries that offer for-credit courses, especially as the College faculty acknowledge more and more the importance and wide-reaching applications of information literacy. Courses such as these would allow for ongoing and course-integrated information literacy instruction that provides reinforcement and opportunities for practice, transference and application.

We should also consider including faculty development opportunities in our information literacy program (Hunt & Birks, 2004). Especially as the program expands, current library staff may not be able to deliver all of the instruction needed. Faculty trained in information literacy skills, working collaboratively with librarians, could help bridge this gap and ensure IL is embedded throughout the curriculum. In addition, online tutorials and tools, involvement in LMSs, and other forms of virtual collaboration could extend the reach of a limited number of librarians. Finally, increased efforts to gather assessment data and instruction feedback (see “Information Literacy Assessment Plan”) will ensure the continued success of the Loras College Library information literacy instruction program.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


