INFORMATION LITERACY: Wrapping your mind around it and getting started

I. Information Literacy Defined

Academic libraries work together with other members of their institutional communities to participate in, support, and achieve the educational mission of their institutions by teaching the core competencies of information literacy—the abilities involved in identifying an information need, accessing needed information, evaluating, managing, and applying information, and understanding the legal, social, and ethical aspects of information use. Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning. Jeremy J. Shapiro and Shelley K. Hughes refer to it as "a new liberal art which extends beyond technical skills and is conceived as the critical reflection on the nature of information itself, its technical infrastructure and its social, cultural and even philosophical context and impact."

II. Information Literacy Program

A. Assumptions

Assumption 1. The information environment is too **complex and changing** too rapidly to expect students to acquire information literacy without **a planned, systematic, cumulative instructional program.** The hit-or-miss process that worked for students and scholars in the past is not efficient or effective today. High school students no longer come to college with research skills. Disciplines are changing. Students are expected to employ sophisticated information-gathering techniques for their college coursework.

Assumption 2. The most **effective** learning about library and information use is tied to a **specific information need** and is often discipline-specific. Examples: preparation of a research paper for a credit class, gathering documentation for a persuasive speech, surveying the literature for a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, choosing a graduate school, finding a summer internship.

Assumption 3. Students must learn **critical thinking** and research skills in their disciplines as preparation for a lifetime of changing information needs.

Assumption 4. Students have different **learning styles** and acquire information in different ways. Any information literacy program must accommodate these differences by using a **variety of approaches** that provide practice in these skills.

Assumption 5. The librarians cannot reach all students, nor can we meet all their training needs. The most effective way to reach all students and meet their information literacy needs is through a **collaboration** between the Library and the departments and their faculty.

B. The Overall Approach

Move to an Integrated or distributive model, rather than extra-curricular.
- Places IL education in the context of each discipline

- Blends IL into upper-level courses (over four years of a curriculum)
- Integrates IL learning objectives into programs and courses
- Collaboration of faculty and librarians

C. Roles
What are the collaborative roles in devising a program and teaching information literacy?

Faculty	Librarians	Administrators
understanding of the strengths, weaknesses, attitudes and interests of the students	knowledge of information skills and methods to integrate them into the course	Create opportunities for collaboration
Define the desired student outcomes	Collaborate with dept on IL plan: outcomes selection	staff development
Outline where in the dept's or program's curriculum that outcomes belong	Review an assignment for possible barriers for students	planning, budgeting, resources
Select the teaching strategy	class presentations that support the outcomes; develop tutorials; appts with students.; resource guides; reference assistance	"stick" (SLA & Middle States)
Provide the context for learning	Develop library collections to support curricula & assignments	
varieties of pedagogical methods		
Inspire students' curiosity to seek information		
Guidance on how best to fulfill information needs		

III. Implementation steps
A. Select/adapt learning objectives at the program level.
B. Assign objectives to courses in the program.
C. Devise course objectives based on performance indicators and/or the ACRL objectives, or use existing course objectives already in place.
D. Develop assignments for chosen courses or revise current assignments.
E. Devise assessment mechanisms (e.g., rubric) to be used for student work and also for overall assessment of the assignment and its placement in that course.
F. Revise assignment, course syllabi, based on assessment info from rubric. ("close the loop")

IV. Resources

Standards toolkit: http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/infolitstandards/standardstoolkit.htm

ACRL's Information Literacy Web site: ideas from other institutions:
http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/informationliteracy.htm

Tests and surveys of students' level of information literacy:
http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/infolitresources/infolitinaction/iltestssurveys.htm

Tips for creating effective research assignments:
http://www.louisville.edu/infoliteracy/promotinginformationliteracy.htm

"Objectives for Information Literacy Instruction: A Model Statement for Academic Librarians." American Library Association. 2004.http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/objectivesinformation.htm (Accessed 4 Jan. 2008)
   These objectives were revised and matched to the performance indicators in the Competency Stds.

Middle States Commission on Higher Education. *Developing Research & Communication Skills: Guidelines for Information Literacy in the Curriculum.* Philadelphia: Middle States, 2003.

Shapiro, J.J. and Hughes, S. K. (1996). "Information Literacy as a Liberal Art: Enlightenment proposals for a new curriculum." *Educom Review,* 31(2) **http://www.educasue.edu/pub/er/reviewarticles/31231.html** (Accessed 4 January 2008)

Putting it all together: Standards, Performance Indicators, Outcomes; Objectives; Classroom work

SOC 101

Competency Standard One: The information literate student determines the extent of the information needed.

Performance Indicator 1: The information literate student defines and articulates the need for information.

Outcome 1.1.e. Identifies key concepts and terms that describe the information need

ACRL
Obj.

- Lists terms that may be useful for locating information on a topic.

- Identifies and uses appropriate general or subject-specific sources to discover terminology related to an information need.

- Decides when a research topic has multiple facets or may need to be put into a broader context.

- Identifies more specific concepts that comprise a research topic.

Outcome 2.1.c. Investigates the scope, content, and organization of information retrieval systems

- Describes the structure and components of the system or tool being used (e.g., index, thesaurus, type of information retrieved by the system).

Performance Indicator 2: The information literate student identifies a variety of types and formats of potential sources for information.

Outcome
1.2.a. Knows how information is formally and informally produced, organized, and disseminated

- Describes the publication cycle appropriate to the discipline of a research topic.

Classroom implementation:

library session: publication cycle, database searching strategies, database selection

Librarian & professor develop assignment worksheet calling for keywords, Boolean strategy, initial citations/abstracts found accompanied with justification for choosing them.

Assignment rubric

In-class quiz