

LIRT News

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LIRT's Top Twenty for 2014

2014 library instruction and information literacy articles selected and annotated by LIRT Top 20 Committee (Ladislava Khailova (Chair), Sherry Tinerella (Co-Chair), Eveline Houtman, Amy Pass, Julie Piacentine, Sharon Radcliff, and Ann Marie Smeraldi).

Alvarez, B., Bonnet, J. L., & Kahn, M. (2014). Publish, not perish: Supporting graduate students as aspiring authors. *Journal of Librarianship and Scholarly Communication*, 2 (3), eP1141 1-10.

This insightful study reports on a multi-semester workshop series developed and offered at the University of Michigan Library to help graduate students navigate the world of scholarly publishing. Drawing on the fact that graduate students planning a career in academia face increasing pressure to become published authors before graduating, this collaborative effort between subject librarians, publishing professionals, and teaching faculty members was organized to address students' concerns about the publishing lifecycle. Upon the completion of a pilot workshop consisting of a single 1.5 hour session accompanied by an online guide with a departmental focus, the librarian team expanded on the project to initiate a campus-wide workshop series. The specific elements of the series included introduction to publishing, a faculty panel with participants from a variety of disciplines, as well as a number of sessions on such topics as copyright, citation analysis and journal ranking, turning a dissertation into a book, and academic blogging. The authors also discuss promotional activities as well as assessment efforts related to the workshop series. This is a clearly written, highly informative article that comes in especially handy with the introduction of the new ACRL Framework and its inclusion of such threshold concepts as Scholarship as Conversation and Research as Inquiry, as it provides interested libraries with a blueprint for a massive, concentrated program teaching students how to become active participants in the information ecosystem.

Avery, S., & Tracy, D. G. (2014). Using transaction log analysis to assess student search behavior in the library instruction classroom. *Reference Services Review*, 42(2), 320–335.

Librarians at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Libraries used transaction logs of student searches of the library's federated search system to learn more about student search behavior. Not only did the logs clearly reflect the students' search methods and strategies during the instruction session, but they let librarians see whether or not students were modeling the search behavior that they had just been taught. The literature review includes many studies reviewing

student search logs, but this particular study is unique in that it is the first to present data collected during student searches conducted within actual bibliographic instruction sessions. In this study the students were mostly freshmen from a variety of majors. For their searches, students in library instruction sessions were asked to find three reliable sources by first developing a concept map of their topic and then creating a search strategy and running a search on that topic. Samples of these maps are included within the article. The authors used the transaction logs to determine whether or not students were able to successfully apply their newly-learned research skills. Some limitations were encountered which are noted within the article. Analysis of the transaction logs was facilitated by use of a scoring rubric that is reproduced within the article. Reviewing transaction logs revealed some common student problems in search string construction and keyword generation, such as how to use quotation marks in a search string, or identify alternative and/or more sophisticated keywords to use in their search. Based on their analysis, the authors feel that transaction log analysis holds value even beyond the scope of their study. Armed with a heightened awareness of common student search problems, librarians at any library can better address these gaps in the classroom as well as at the reference desk.

Bauch, N., & Sheldon, C. (2014). Tacit information literacies in beginning college students: Research pedagogy in geography. *Harvard Educational Review*, 84(3), 403–423.

A geography professor and an academic librarian partnered to develop class assignments that would incorporate information literacy skills through the lens of cultural geography in their own community. These assignments, worked before a final research project was due, would allow the instructors to identify and address research skill gaps, as well as to support and build upon the valuable tacit information literacies the students already possessed. Two kinds of assignments were designed, implemented, and assessed. First, students were asked to create “surf maps” to show their methods for discovering web-based information on their topic. As they presented their maps to their classmates and demonstrated their search techniques, faculty were able to reaffirm successful research methods and guide students away from flawed search strategies. Feedback from peers during these presentations also provided valuable teaching moments and opportunity for discussion. Next, students built “concept ladders” to connect their research topic to broader themes within the scholarly literature. Concept ladders allowed the students to gradually climb from their original, narrow topic to broader and more abstract themes as they moved up each rung of the ladder. Students used their newly-identified search terms to find materials in library research databases and discovered that reconsidering their topic within a wider

conceptual framework expanded not only their search results but their understanding of how their topic could be relevant within a larger disciplinary scope. The authors present these teaching strategies with a high level of detail. For example, the article includes concrete examples and reproductions of student work and how each item was addressed within the instructional framework, which ensures these teaching tools are replicable in other academic environments.

Buck, S. (2014). Instruction boot camp: Better instruction through collaborative course design. *Journal of Library Administration*, 54(3), 197-216.

Buck's highly informative case study discusses Instruction Boot Camp, a two- to three-hour in-house professional development opportunity offered in 2012 at Oregon State University Libraries and Press (OSUL&P). Drawing upon several established peer-group based collaborative programs and models, such as ACRL Immersion, OSUL&P's research and writing boot camp, and lesson studies, the event aimed to improve librarians' instructional competencies through experience sharing. Specifically, in a workshop setting, librarians collaborated in small teams of four to six to help a colleague improve an instructional session. All librarians with instruction in their job description were invited, with all having the opportunity to submit an application for their session to be redesigned. In order to better focus the revision process, librarians whose sessions were selected for a makeover filled out a course-design document outlining course learning objectives, intended audience, instructional strategies and assessment. The program was very well received, with librarians citing such benefits as exposure to different teaching styles and learning new instructional design skills. The author's inclusion of a list of recommendations for institutions wishing to hold a similar workshop makes this cost-effective event easy to replicate. Possible limitations of the study include a lack of assessment beyond librarian satisfaction and the decision not to invite non-library faculty to the workshops, even in cases when an analyzed library one-shot instruction session was part of their credit-bearing course. Both of these limitations are addressed by the author.

Furay, J. (2014). Stages of instruction: Theatre, pedagogy and information literacy. *Reference Services Review*, 42(2), 209–228.

Furay explores library instruction through the lens of theatrical performance. The author reviews the literature of theater in business presentations and instruction. She covers a variety of theatrical elements related to performance and engagement of an audience and applies them to the classroom, particularly "one-shot" environment. With great acumen Furay discusses how lighting, scenery, imagery, voice, space, narrative, and humor can all become important elements in a well-scripted, acted and directed information literacy session by drawing upon a wide range of literature from various fields. Furay paints an articulate and

convincing argument to encourage librarians to foray into the area of theater in their quest to make instruction more engaging to students.

Green, L. S., & Jones, S. (2014). Instructional partners in digital library learning spaces. *Knowledge Quest*, 42(4), E11–E17.

Green and Jones call for school librarians to play an active role in online learning by designing and teaching online courses. Differentiating between three types of online learning spaces – virtual libraries, flipped classrooms, and fully online courses – the authors describe how school librarians' roles in these spaces differ. They also present a concise instructional design model for online learning: plan, prepare, present, perfect. The article makes a valuable contribution by presenting a concise overview of the opportunities for, benefits of, and an approach to providing online library courses. It is of particular value to school librarians seeking a starting point for teaching online.

Jastram, I., Leebaw, D., & Tompkins, H. (2014). Situating information literacy within the curriculum: Using a rubric to shape a program. *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 14(2), 165–186.

Rubrics can be a powerful tool for assessing student learning, and they are beginning to be more widely used in information literacy instruction. In this article, the authors discuss an unusually extensive IL rubric project that began five years ago and is still ongoing. They describe what they learned about their students, but their focus is also on the powerful effects the development of a rubric can have on an IL program. At the outset of the project, the questions they investigated had to do with students' skills. For example, could they distinguish between popular and scholarly sources? As the project progressed, the authors became more interested in students' IL habits of mind. Could they draw on evidence to make an argument or pull together primary sources to make a claim? Through the rubric, the librarians developed a better understanding of students' strengths and weaknesses in the areas of attribution, evaluation of sources, and synthesis and incorporation of sources. This better understanding directly informed classroom practice, particularly through a recognition of the extent to which students need guidance about the role that evidence plays in their writing and thinking. The project also deepened the librarians' own understanding of IL as a critical habit of mind. As they presented on the project at their institution, they were able to engage faculty in meaningful conversations about IL, pedagogy and curriculum. Together they are beginning to set community-wide expectations. Although the authors had hoped to learn about their students' abilities, they had not anticipated the ways the rubric project would also lead to conversation and change on campus. The "Information Literacy in Student Writing Rubric" is included in the appendix.

Jumonville, A. (2014). The role of faculty autonomy in a course-integrated information literacy program. *Reference Services Review*, 42(4), 536–551.

Jumonville's unique analysis of grant applications, post-assessment data, and other artifacts generated by the Information Literacy Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) conducted at her university as part of the accreditation process offers librarians insight on how supporting faculty autonomy positively impacts faculty–librarian collaborations. After summarizing the relevant data from these documents, the author uses self-determination theory to better understand faculty motivation and tease out a new approach for encouraging faculty to integrate information literacy into their course goals. The author discovers the important role autonomy plays in motivating faculty to adopt and align information literacy goals within their courses. The evidence presented in this case study suggests that if faculty are free to select information literacy outcomes and assessment tools that match their understanding and support their overall course goals, they will be more likely to identify with information literacy values in a way that leads to deeper integration of these values within their pedagogical framework. Instead of prescribing a specific information literacy plan, librarians should offer gentle support and guidance to faculty as they work through the process of integrating information literacy into a course. Jumonville's insightful article will help librarians better comprehend faculty motivation and prepare them to use this enhanced understanding to create effective and sustainable partnerships that promote information literacy across the curriculum.

Knapp, J. A., Rowland, N. J., & Charles, E. P. (2014). Retaining students by embedding librarians into undergraduate research experiences. *Reference Services Review*, 42(1), 129–147.

Quantifying the impact of libraries and librarians on student retention is a challenge. In their case study, Knapp, Rowland, and Charles describe how embedding librarians in undergraduate research experiences (UREs) can impact student retention. The authors provide a sample curriculum, including detailed descriptions of learning activities to be used in the context of UREs. These well-designed “science games” are a key contribution of the case study. The games are impactful yet compact, appropriate for implementation in a variety of instructional contexts. However, because the authors are reporting on the curriculum and games prior to implementation, the activities have not been assessed. The authors suggest areas for further research, such as quantifying the impact of embedded librarianship on student retention through student data.

Leichner, N., Peter, J., Mayer, A. K., & Krampen, G. (2014). Assessing information literacy programmes using information search tasks. *Journal of Information Literacy*, 8(1), 3–20.

Leichner et al. show that it is possible to create rubrics for scoring information search tasks in order to assess information literacy. The authors compare common IL assessment methods, including standardized tests, analysis of bibliographies, portfolio analysis, and the use of information search tasks. The latter, they argue, are more similar to real-world tasks and therefore offer a more accurate assessment of information literacy, while offering the convenience of a standardized instrument. The authors present a taxonomy of scholarly information search tasks, from which other practitioners might create their own tasks and assessments. While these tasks are more similar to students' real work than multiple-choice questions posed in standardized tests, they do not comprise truly authentic assessment. Also, assessment based solely on information search tasks neglects other important IL skills such as evaluation, integration, and synthesis.

Lundstrom, K., Fagerheim, B. A., & Benson, E. (2014). Librarians and instructors developing student learning outcomes: Using frameworks to lead the process. *Reference Services Review*, 42(3), 484-498.

Lundstrom, Fagerheim and Benson report on an assessment program for college writing courses that identified "bottlenecks" in learning, including topic development, reading comprehension, and synthesis. The authors designed an eight week workshop for writing faculty and librarians to re-design learning outcomes for their classes based on these bottlenecks and the new ACRL Framework for Information Literacy, using backward design principles. The workshops, attended by five writing lecturers and four librarians, were successful and were used as a model for other workshops in the disciplines.

Miller, K. E. (2014). Imagine! On the future of teaching and learning and the academic research library. *portal: Libraries and the Academy*, 14(3), 329–351.

Miller asks how academic libraries, especially within a constantly changing culture of learning, are supporting their students. She presents seven strategies that academic libraries can adopt in order to meet the more experiential and hands-on learning style of the "next university" student. The library of the future, in order to succeed, will need to support a new kind of higher education where students are more questioning, collaborative and purposeful. "Future-present" libraries, as Miller describes, are those that are already responding to those ever-changing user needs. Each of Miller's strategies is presented with a real-life, tangible example of how the UCLA Library interpreted and applied it, as well as related innovative practices from other libraries. Miller's unique style of considering how and why an academic library supports its students within a framework of change by looking toward the library of the future and the "next university" provides a valuable roadmap to help keep libraries from becoming mired within their current structure and context. Students are not the only ones who will benefit when libraries implement these strategies; libraries will be

positively transformed by constantly reaching and growing into the next “future-present” version of themselves. Practical examples and successful, innovative models keep this article grounded and practical while still imaginatively providing inspiration to libraries and librarians looking to stay relevant and valuable in a time of constant change.

Moselen, C., & Wang, L. (2014). Integrating information literacy into academic curricula: A professional development programme for librarians at the University of Auckland. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 40(2), 116–123.

Moselen and Wang report on an exemplary professional development program for librarians at the University of Auckland that prepares them to work with academic staff to integrate information literacy into the curriculum. Based on a model of IL curricular integration developed by Wang in her doctoral work, the program focuses on the what, who and how of integration. What refers to the IL guidelines found in the intended curriculum. Who refers to the stakeholders and all who might have a role in IL integration. How refers to all the planning, design, and pedagogy involved in teaching IL across multiple courses in a particular context. The program consists of five modules, representing a significant investment of time for both participants and instructors. Although the results of the program have not yet been formally assessed, anecdotal evidence shows increased IL activity, especially in areas with little previous activity. Librarians also feel more confident in addressing curricular issues with academic staff. As a happy side effect, librarians feel re-engaged with IL as they have the chance to reflect on and discuss the meaning of IL in their own context. The authors suggest the methodology behind their program would be highly applicable to other institutions.

Nichols Hess, A. K. (2014). Web tutorials workflows: How scholarship, institutional experiences, and peer institutions' practices shaped one academic library's online learning offerings. *New Library World*, 115(3/4), 87–101.

Nichols Hess' article discussing online tutorials stands out among the many found in professional literature as a unique and valuable contribution to the scholarly discourse on this topic. Her article walks the reader through the process of developing a workflow for creating, assessing, and marketing online learning objects. She begins with a literature review that concisely summarizes significant research findings and results in a comprehensive, easy to follow list of best practices grounded in scholarship. Recognizing the importance of considering the unique climate of her library and institution, the author arranged for informal conversations with other university librarians to discern their concerns and suggestions. The information gathered during these open discussions assisted the author in constructing a framework for creating, revising, and sharing online learning objects. Nichols Hess continues her information gathering by selecting fourteen public universities' websites and examining their online learning objects

within the context of six predetermined criteria. During this process the author discovers the strengths and weaknesses of her library's tutorials. In the next section of the article, the author synthesizes the information collected from the scholarly literature, conversations, and website analyses to develop comprehensive guidelines, a detailed workflow, and a tutorial evaluation rubric. The author uses the acronym MAGIC (maintainable, available, geared at users, informative, and customizable) to frame the new structure for an online tutorial project. The article concludes with a glimpse at MAGIC in action and the next steps for this project. Any librarian responsible for online tutorials will benefit from reading this well-written, practical article which includes the workflow diagram, rubric, and redesign timeline.

Oakleaf, M. (2014). A roadmap for assessing student learning using the new Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 40(5), 510–514.

Since the new ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education differs substantially from the previous Standards in terms of its theoretical underpinnings, areas of focus, and structure, this article aims to provide a roadmap for library professionals as they begin to use the frames. Oakleaf skillfully guides readers through a series of steps for the adaptation process, including the need for an institution to identify and prioritize overarching thresholds it will follow, translating these concepts into measurable learning outcomes, securing the support of all stakeholders, employing active learning and assessment strategies in related instructional design activities, developing curriculum maps that merge student learning opportunities with library instruction, and making decisions regarding how to deploy the Framework-empowered instruction plans. The author focuses especially on the assessment challenge the frames pose. She recommends that libraries use performance assessment techniques, such as concept maps, research logs, and self or peer evaluations, rather than surveys or fixed-choice skill tests and develop (and later norm) corresponding rubrics. Libraries are also encouraged to report the assessment results at the programmatic level and to reflect on them in order to make improvements as needed. This is a must-read, timely piece for librarians at any institution beginning to incorporate threshold concepts into their information literacy teaching practice.

Palsson, F., & McDade, C. L. (2014). Factors affecting the successful implementation of a common assignment for first-year composition information literacy. *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, 21(2), 193-209.

Academic librarians grappling with the challenges of assessing student learning will appreciate Palsson and McDade's article summarizing the two-year process of implementing a common assignment within a first-year writing course. The authors stress the importance of moving from one-shot sessions to course

integrated instruction and aligning information literacy and course learning outcomes to support assessment. Through a careful analysis of both the successes and failures they encountered during the first year of the pilot program and the subsequent changes they made to improve the assessment process, the authors construct a valuable model for librarians to use at their institutions. Effective librarian and faculty collaborations lie at the heart of this model. For most readers, the need for collaboration will not come as a surprise. However, these authors, through thoughtful insights and practical examples, offer librarians a fresh approach for securing the support of course instructors. They use pedagogical theory and published research to build an effective argument for using a common assignment across multiple course sections to facilitate assessment. As Palsson and McDade explain why they chose to use a rubric for assessment, they also reveal the challenges posed by this assessment method and how the shortcomings in their initial implementation intensified these challenges. Through an honest examination of the program's weaknesses, the authors discover effective strategies for fostering faculty–librarian collaborations and improving their program. Instruction and assessment librarians will be able to easily adapt these strategies to their unique situations. Librarians seeking tangible examples will welcome the assignment handout, rubrics, and instructor workshop activities included in the appendices.

Pickard, A. J., Shenton, A. K., & Johnson, A. (2014). Young people and the evaluation of information on the World Wide Web: Principles, practice and beliefs. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 46(1), 3–20.

Research on information seeking behavior should inform information literacy teaching, suggest the authors of this article. Their own research project investigates the evaluation of internet sources by young people aged 13-18. According to much of the literature they survey, young people tend not to rigorously evaluate information they find on the internet. Suggested causes range from the heavy cognitive burden imposed by evaluation (which sits at the top of Bloom's taxonomy) to the students' lack of engagement with their assignments to some young people's belief that if it is published on the internet it is true. The various information literacy models and frameworks the authors survey certainly emphasize the evaluation of information sources. Evaluation of source material has also become a mainstream skill in the classroom. However, the authors recognize that young people are unlikely to adopt the strategies they are taught unless they appreciate their value. Their research project, conducted at a school in England, therefore focuses on assessing student attitudes to proven criteria for evaluation, specifically their attitudes to various internal cues. They found that the criteria most highly valued by the participants were currency; freedom from spelling and grammar mistakes; and the ability to easily verify the information elsewhere. Authorship was least valued, although the organization responsible for the web page was seen as important. In their recommendations the authors

emphasize reinforcing students' good practices, identifying assessment criteria that the class can agree on, and teaching techniques to apply them.

Tewell, E. C. (2014). Tying television comedies to information literacy: A mixed-methods investigation. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 40(2), 134–141.

Tewell reports on a mixed method study conducted at a small liberal arts college. Half of the information literacy sections in one semester (eight) received an experimental instructional method consisting of illustrating information literacy concepts through the use of comedy film clips, while the other half received traditional instruction. The author adds to the growing literature on using popular culture to increase student interest and achievement in information literacy sessions. The results from this study were inconclusive though they did show that students in the experimental group did perform slightly better on the post-test. The focus groups demonstrated that students were more interested in the content than in the format employed in the sessions.

Wilkinson, C. W., & Bruch, C. (2014). Building a library subculture to sustain information literacy practice with second order change. *Communications in Information Literacy*, 8(1), 82–95.

Carrol Wetzel Wilkinson and Courtney Bruch provide the rationale and a plan of action for librarians to embrace in order to create an internal information literacy (IL) library culture. In June of 2013 ACRL revised the 2012 Characteristics of Programs of Information Literacy that Illustrate Best Practices, which clearly states that a fully evolved IL program is characterized by a mission, goals, a plan, administrative and institutional support along with a program of curriculum, pedagogy, staffing, outreach, and assessment. A review of library literature, the authors' lived experiences, and elements of theory on organizational culture from Edgar Schein are blended calling on instruction librarians to implement second order change that will support libraries within the greater campus culture. Fostering an IL culture is an important factor as libraries re-establish strategic priorities aligning goals with those of the institution. Wilkinson and Bruch use these principles in relation to library instruction to outline steps to move forward with this endeavor: organizational assessment, encouraging courageous conversation, recognizing and addressing change resistance, and fostering inclusive dialogue with implementation of an action plan. The authors give practical examples, discuss likely obstacles, and offer suggestions for success in making changes. This is an excellent guide to share with library colleagues and begin a conversation about the strategic importance of IL.

Witek, D., & Grettano, T. (2014). Teaching metaliteracy: A new paradigm in action. *Reference Services Review*, 42(2), 188–208.

This article provides an in-depth look at a course designed to incorporate metaliteracy. The authors created and taught an undergraduate course titled

Rhetoric and Social Media at The University of Scranton using metaliteracy competencies, information literacy standards, and basic rhetoric theory as a basis for the course goals. Through this study Witek and Grettano discovered four themes that reflect the need for the recent overhaul of ACRL Information Literacy Standards for Higher Education (2000): 1) information now comes to users; 2) information recall and attribution are now social; 3) evaluation is now social; and 4) information is now open. The update published in February from ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (2015) draws from the metaliteracy competencies as well as the former Standards. This study illustrates how to teach and assess information literacy in light of the differences in how information is delivered, evaluated, and used in the second decade of the 21st century. The students used familiar social media tools such as Facebook to produce and share information for this course. This article is an excellent example of bringing together information literacy skills with the changes in information delivery as they apply to higher level thinking processes and the new Framework that takes these into account.