Teaching Information Literacy at Smith

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Teaching Arts Lunch, Feb. 20, 2015
Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.

Association of College & Research Libraries, *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*
2000 ACRL Standards

The information literate student:

1. determines the nature and extent of the information needed
2. accesses needed information effectively and efficiently
3. evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system
4. individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
5. understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally

http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency
First Steps: CAP Subcommittee

Recommendations, January 2003

1- Each student will participate in two information intensive classes
   ● one during her first two years
   ● one in her major field during her final two years

2- The content of these courses will vary greatly by discipline, but all will have common, measurable information literacy outcomes

3- A committee of faculty, librarians, and information technologists will:
   ● Develop a proposal for a Smith College information literacy requirement
   ● Assist individual departments in drafting and implementing information literacy programs
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall 2003</td>
<td>Information Literacy Team forms to implement CAP recommendations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fall 2004</td>
<td>Information Literacy program launches</td>
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<td>2003-2015</td>
<td>Departments draft discipline-specific programs</td>
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Smith’s Current Program

- Research skills quiz for all first year students
- Honors student research appointments
- 35 department programs

http://www.smith.edu/libraries/services/faculty/infolit/program
New approaches

● 2010: ACRL Standards up for review
● 2012: Task force appointed by ACRL Board:
  ○ Address changes in information environment since 2000
  ○ Develop a more nuanced, less task-oriented approach to information literacy, reflecting how real researchers work
“They were inefficient; they were messy and their processes were anything but streamlined. They engaged in rigorous but idiosyncratic work that followed arguments and evidence from person to person, source to source and idea to idea. Yet they did great research.”

-- Nancy Fried Foster, *Information Literacy and Research Practices*, 2014 (Ithaka S+R)

http://sr.ithaka.org/blog-individual/information-literacy-and-research-practices
Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (2015)

- New definition of information literacy
- Focus on metaliteracy
- Built on six “frames” or threshold concepts

http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework
Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (2015)

“Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.”
Six frames or threshold concepts*

- Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
- Information Creation as a Process
- Information Has Value
- Research as Inquiry
- Scholarship as Conversation
- Searching as Strategic Exploration

*“those ideas in any discipline that are passageways or portals to enlarged understanding or ways of thinking and practicing within that discipline.”
Scholarship as Conversation
(example of a frame)

Description:
Communities of scholars, researchers, or professionals engage in sustained discourse with new insights and discoveries occurring over time as a result of varied perspectives and interpretations.
Scholarship as Conversation
(example of a frame)

- **Knowledge practice:** Learners who are developing their information literate abilities cite the contributing work of others in their own information production.

- **Disposition:** Learners who are developing their information literate abilities recognize that they are often entering into an ongoing scholarly conversation, not a finished conversation.
Discussion

- What works and doesn't about how we’re currently teaching students to do library research?
- How would we incorporate the new framework into the library instruction curriculum? How could research assignments match up to the frames?
- What should be the library’s teaching and learning mission overall? What are we missing?