LIRT Top Twenty for 2011

Submitted by the Top 20 Committee: High quality library-instruction related articles from all types of libraries

Battles, Jason, Valerie Glenn, and Lindley Shedd

the faculty interviews, information revealed by the geoinformatics course and through a study of ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards.

Cherry, Joan M., Wendy M. Duff, Nalini Singh, and Luanne Freund. "Student Perceptions of the Information Professions and their Master's Program in Information Studies." *Library & Information Science Research* 33 (2011): 120-131.

Using a sound longitudinal survey methodology, this study investigated how students in a graduate information studies department viewed their profession, their job prospects, and their own program of study. The authors created open and closed-ended questions to gauge and analyze students' perceptions over the course of their Master's studies. They found that students were optimistic about their chosen profession and their job prospects. The majority of students believed the profession was growing and would continue to grow in the future. Students also believed that a "great deal of computer knowledge" would be needed in the

When you are sick, you hope your doctor knows what he or she is doing. This New Zealand study examines the information seeking skills of junior doctors. The authors interviewed and observed doctors from five different undergraduate medical cohorts from the 1990s through the years 2000. Although most of the doctors interviewed could recall their initial information skills training, most had broadened their skills beyond that to include Google and also newer medical resources. These doctors were also asked to assess their own information seeking skills and conduct an independent search under observation. Like traditional college students, the doctors rated their skills higher than what they actually were. Unfortunately, the authors note that the doctors retained little high-level information seeking skills, which emphasizes the need for more training in higher-level courses.

Dabbour, Katherine S., and James David Ballard. "Information Literacy and U.S. Latino College Students: A Cross-Cultural Analysis." *New Library World* 112.7/8 (2011): 347-364.

An analysis of data from a grant project at California State University Northridge (CSUN) reveals a complex picture of Latino and white students' use of the library, Internet access, information literacy instruction, and information literacy knowledge. In 2004, a random sample of students was surveyed using questions based on the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards. The researchers hypothesized that pre-existing educational differences between Latino and white students would correlate with lower information literacy skills. Although Latino students did score lower on several skills-based questions on the survey, they also used the library more often for Internet access, study, and relaxation, had more information literacy instruction (perhaps due to targeted freshmen and general education programs), and were just as likely as white students to feel that library skills contributed to their academic success. Researchers did not find the significant differences they expected, and they suggest that language and cultural biases in the skills assessment may have contributed to some of the differences in the scores. Latino students did rely more on the library for Internet access, which has implications for library services and collection development. The researchers also noted that overall neither Latino nor white students did as well as expected on the library skills test; assessment techniques and amount of students' access to K-12 library instruction are suggested as future areas of study.

Deitering, Anne-Marie and Kate Gronemyer. "Beyond Peer-Reviewed Articles: Using Blogs to Enrich Students' Understanding of Scholarly Work." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 11.1 (2011): 489-503.

Given that a primary goal of information literacy is to create lifelong learners, Deitering and Gronemyer effectively argue that students need to learn the context in which peer-reviewed and scholarly research is created in order to fully

understand the research itself. Experts in a discipline have internalized the background knowledge, ongoing scholarly debates, and shared standards in the field; most students have not. Therefore, it is imperative that librarians (who often teach in classes outside their own subject expertise, making them beneficially empathetic to the students' lack of context) explore new instructional methods for introducing students to those ongoing scholarly debates in a way that helps students make connections between the broader discipline and a specific publication. The authors recommend using group, academic, and public blogs to show students that the authors of scholarly articles are engaged in public scholarly conversations about their work and about their peers' works. Such social mediation of scholarly discourse offers opportunities for the librarians and classroom faculty to introduce not only the context in which the scholarship is created, but also to introduce critical evaluation of web resources, explanations of the difference between a blog about an article and the article itself, and sources that still may be freely accessible after a student graduates (unlike subscription-based scholarly databases). The authors do not present evidence of how effective this approach has been, but they do elucidate their theoretical foundation and offer practical instruction methods to try.

Dunaway, Michelle Kathleen and Michael Teague Orblych. "Formative Assessment: Transforming Information Literacy Instruction." *Reference Services Review* 39.1 (2011): 24-41.

This article looks at using formative assessment to measure graduate students' information literacy skills and abilities and as a way of tailoring one-shot information literacy instruction sessions to those individual students' needs. To do this, students completed a pre-class assessment form to measure their existing information literacy skills; then in class, students answered three questions using an audience response system to demonstrate how well they had mastered the information literacy skills introduced in the pre-assessment form. The students' answers were then used by the instructor to adjust and mold the content of the class to best meet the needs of the students. These assessments were implemented in two elective classes in the MBA program and completed by thirty-four students. The authors found that having students complete the pre-class assessment, and the follow-up in-class assessment, allowed them to adjust their instruction to suit their students' needs and focus on the specific skills needed by those students. Assessing student learning in this way helped create "customized" classes that targeted different information literacy topics and skills, depending on what those students needed; the first class focused on peer reviewed sources in evaluating the credibility of content, credibility issues with web content, various ways to use listed sources, and how to locate current sources. The second class, which occurred the following semester, spent more instruction time on the significance of the peer review process in evaluating the

credibility of sources, how to use specific library resources, and answering specific questions students had.

Gustavson, Amy, and H. Clark Nall. "Freshman Overconfidence and Library Research Skills: A Troubling Relationship?" *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 18.4 (2011): 291-306.

> Librarians at East Carolina University surveyed 377 freshmen college students, asking them to rate their own skills in completing library research, and then measured their ability to actually do research using an eight-question skills test. The population sample included first-semester freshmen, mostly between the ages of 18-24; 61.5% were women and 38.2% were men. Data on age, gender, and high school G.P.A. was also gathered to see if it affected confidence level or skills. The largest response group on the confidence level question was a "3" - right in the middle (with "1" being "Not Confident" and "5" being "Very confident".) The highest average scores on the skills test were from the students who rated themselves as a "3" on the confidence level. The two groups that were overconfident – measured by below-average scores on the skills test - were those with confidence-level scores of "4" or "5" and those who had previously had library instruction. Students who received good grades in high school had a slightly higher confidence rating and did better on the skills test. Previous exposure to library instruction was also associated with higher scores. The authors suggest ways to deal with overconfidence in the library instruction classroom, including using guided, hands-on activities.

Mackey, Thomas P., and Trudi E. Jacobson. "Reframing Information Literacy as a Metaliteracy." *College & Research Libraries* 72.1 (2011): 62-78.

> Mackey and Jacobson offer not an alternative to information literacy, but rather a recasting of it so that it connects several other types of literacies that account for the changing technologies inherent in participatory Web 2.0 environments. The article begins with a succinct summary of types of literacies, including: information literacy, media literacy, digital literacy, visual literacy, information fluency, and cyberliteracy. Each type of literacy has elements that incorporate the well-known ACRL Information Literacy standards. In practice, metaliteracy consists of these elements: understanding format type and delivery mode; evaluating user feedback as an active researcher; creating a context for user-generated information; evaluating dynamic content critically; producing original content in multiple media formats; understanding personal privacy, information ethics and intellectual property issues; and sharing information in participatory environments. What is different about Mackey and Jacobson's metaliteracy is that it keeps all of the elements of the ACRL Standards but incorporates producing and sharing information as a way of moving beyond a skills-based approach to information.

Mery, Yvonne, Jill Newby, and Ke Peng. "Assessing the Reliability and Validity of Locally Developed Information Literacy Test Items." *Reference Services Review* 39.1 (2011): 98-122.

Librarians at the University of Arizona provide a strong model for successful library instruction assessment in this statistically rigorous article. A locally created test was administered to assess students in an online credit course. One hundred and twenty five items were created to assess 1,400 students. These results were also compared to the SAILS results to test the validity of the items. The authors provide an in-depth explanation of their meticulous research methods. They also provide lists of the items that they created and examples of how they came to revise the items using a statistically comparative model. Readers can look at this article as an example of an assessment method they can employ at their own institution as well as providing examples of strong assessment questions.

Oakleaf, Megan, Michelle S. Millet, and Leah Kraus. "All Together Now: Getting Faculty, Administrators, and Staff Engaged in Information Literacy Assessment." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 11.3 (2011): 831-852.

This article describes the efforts of Trinity University librarians to convince faculty, staff and administrators of the inherent value of information literacy (IL) as a component of college education and to win their participation in collaborative information literacy evaluation and instruction. Their three-part process included establishing a common, campus-level definition of information literacy and educational goals, creating workshops to further educate non-librarians about the value of information literacy education, and discussing possible barriers to non-library acceptance of the importance of collaborative information literacy

Snavely, Loanne, and Nancy Dewald. "Developing and Implementing Peer Review of Academic Librarians' Teaching: An Overview and Case Report." *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 37.4 (2011): 343-351.

Assessment of credit-bearing instruction has been a well-documented discussion within higher education literature since the 1990s, but in academic libraries there is a perception that the use of peer evaluation as a tool for assessment may be largely underutilized. As part of their promotion and tenure evaluation process, the Penn State University Libraries were asked to "develop a form of assessment that is credible to faculty and administrators across the University community." This charge led to the development of formative and summative methods for evaluation that would incorporate a system of peer review, along with more traditional assessment and review components, into the promotion and tenure review process. In this article, Snavely and Dewald describe the development of formative and summative assessment methods and provide an outline for how to incorporate comprehensive peer review into an overarching assessment of library instruction. They provide analysis and discussions for topics pre-observation, during class observation, and for post-observation meetings with the instructor. Snavely and Dewald conclude that the benefits gained from the feedback gathered by peers can raise confidence levels among teachers, broaden awareness, improve technique and enhance engagement between both students and teachers, as well as among librarian instructors.

Wong, Shun Han Rebekah, and Dianne Cmor. "Measuring Association between Library Instruction and Graduation GPA." *College & Research Libraries* 72.5 (2011): 464-473.

Wong and Cmor investigated the correlation between students' cumulative grade point averages and their attendance at library workshops. The authors conducted a longitudinal study (45 sample groups; n = 8,701) using a Chi-Square Test for Independence. They found a strong correlation between the two variables. Attendance at one or two discrete library workshops had little effect on GPS; however, 50 percent of the programs which offered three or four library workshops as a constituent component showed an improvement in students' GPA. Wong and Cmor also found that certain programs (English, for example) are more dependent upon information literacy than other programs (math or visual arts).

Swoger, Bonnie J.M. "Closing the Assessment Loop Using Pre and Post-Assessment." *Reference Services Review* 39.2 (2011): 244-259.

Bonnie Swoger describes a project at SUNY Geneseo that measured the information literacy skills of incoming students and then used assessment tools to make changes in the library's instructional program. Librarians at Geneseo administered a pre-test to first-year students, and after a one-shot bibliographic

session, followed up with a post test. They found that library instruction was out of sync with the students' skill set(s). Swoger translates the ACRL's Information Literacy Competency Standards into measureable goals and the article contains examples of pre- and post-assessment tools. Libraries and librarians looking for assessment assistance can benefit from this study.

Townsend, Lori, Korey Brunetti, and Amy R. Hofer. "Threshold Concepts and Information Literacy." *portal: Libraries and the Academy* 11.3 (2011): 853-869.

Lori Townsend, Kari Brunetti and Amy Hofer ask, "What do we teach when we teach information literacy in higher education?" The authors contend that the threshold concepts of Meyer and Land offer a promising theoretical framework for identifying and teaching the content of information literacy. Townsend et al. reinterpret these threshold concepts for librarians in the following way-- transformative causes the learner to experience a shift in perspective; integrative brings together separate concepts; irreversible, once grasped, is enduring; troublesome is when students encounter difficulties, and bounded refers to the unique boundaries of a discipline. They then suggest that we need to apply these concepts to our students to get a better understanding of the challenges of teaching information literacy.