
FACULTY DEVELOPMENT AND INFORMATION LITERACY:

ESTABLISHING CAMPUS PARTNERSHIPS

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Academic librarians can and should play a leadership role in faculty development efforts on their campuses. This article addresses the connections between faculty development and information literacy and presents strategies for establishing campus partnerships. Specifically, it addresses five related topics: information literacy and campus culture, campus initiatives, strategies for partnerships, a faculty development model, and the Florida International University (FIU) Model for Information Literacy.

Prior to exploring these topics, librarians should clarify a series of assumptions about information literacy. The definition for information literacy used as a frame of reference, as provided by the American Library Association (ALA), asserts that an information literate person is able to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."¹

Information Literacy—It's Not Just the Library

The information literacy agenda extends beyond the library into the classroom and requires the collaboration of librarians and instructors. It is not library instruction with a new name. The critical thinking components of information literacy begin before students enter the library and continue long after students leave the library.

Organizational Culture Develops Slowly—Be Patient

The culture of an organization changes slowly and the culture of a college or university may require years to evolve. Information literacy programs within these environments often develop slowly as well. Recognize

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and encourage the signs of change, but do not expect to transform a campus culture overnight.

Campus Culture Begins at the Top

Edgar Schein's work on organizational culture and maturation¹ points² shows that strong organizational culture is determined by the top leaders of the organization, regardless of the type of organization. Schein's research also demonstrates that if the senior leaders of the organization do not incorporate a specific issue into their vision, then subcultures relating to this issue may develop across the organization. A major shift in the culture of an organization, one that involves the entire organization, requires support from senior administrators and this support must permeate throughout the organization. Such a culture shift requires time, an appropriate strategy, successful networking, and patience.

Campus Culture and Information Literacy

How do we know that our campus culture is evolving to include an information literacy agenda? A campus culture that includes information literacy is reflected in three different subcultures: the library, the faculty, and the administration. Each of these three subcultures should contribute to the information literacy agenda.

- **The library**—The mission statement and planning documents are key factors in assessing the library and the extent to which information literacy is embedded in this culture. Does the mission statement include a statement for information literacy? Does the strategic plan include goals and objectives and action items for informational literacy? Do individual goals and objectives for performance include an information literacy component? Is there funding and other measurable support for an information literacy agenda? Finally, is any kind of a reward system in place for participants in the information literacy program? These are a few indicators that information literacy is reflected in the library culture.
- **The faculty**—In assessing the extent to which information literacy is imbedded in the culture of the faculty, key players are the faculty senate and the faculty senate committees. Do any faculty senate initiatives incorporate information literacy within committee charges, agendas, and projects?
One should also examine the overall core curricula, as well as the core curricula in the individual colleges, schools, and departments. Are

there any teaching objectives, learning outcomes, or course requirements in the general core, or for specific programs that incorporate information literacy? As you progress from overall faculty culture to individual faculty culture, indicators of information literacy should be reflected in course syllabi and assignments. Finally, do any assessment programs not only focus on student learning for the content of the material, but also include an assessment of the information literacy skills?

- **The administration**—In assessing the university administration, and the extent to which information literacy is reflected in its culture, examine the mission of the university. Is there language that reflects information literacy? There may be language that incorporates or embodies the spirit of information literacy, but it may not use the phrase "information literacy." If the mission statement does not include language relevant for information literacy, there may be an opportunity for you as an individual, or for the library, to play a role in suggesting appropriate language. Similarly, examine university strategic planning documents. Is there anything in your university strategic plan that incorporates outcomes for information literacy?

Funding not only indicates support, but also reflects the priorities of the university, which in turn represents the overall culture of the university. What kind of funding is available for an information literacy program? Is this support found within the library, or can the library receive special funding to support its information literacy initiative? What reward systems are in place for faculty or librarians who participate in an information literacy initiative? These are some of the indicators one can investigate to assess organizational culture. These indicators also serve as target areas to influence the status of information literacy within campus culture.

Hot Initiatives on Your Campus

The issue of organizational energy and the identification of appropriate campus initiatives is a key component to a successful information literacy agenda. *Consider this unusual request.* Do not think about information literacy. This may seem contradictory, and the desire to talk and lecture about a topic so important to our profession is always tempting but this step is crucial in order to place information literacy within the larger university agenda. To identify a university's agenda, identify the most important initiatives on your

campus, the aptly named “hot initiatives.” Typical “hot initiatives” may include some of the following:

- **Accreditation**—Accreditation occurs throughout academe, and all universities deal with this issue. Universities allocate a great deal of organizational energy to create committees, subcommittees, and task forces to prepare for regional accreditation reviews.
- **Writing across the curriculum**—Today, universities and colleges across the United States are seeking to establish “writing across the curriculum” programs. These programs often extend beyond the traditional freshman composition program and include upper-division courses and specific subject areas.
- **Student retention**—Student retention is another extremely important focus on campuses. The popularity of freshman experience courses is an indication of the interest in developing programs to help students succeed in college. Student success is such an important issue in higher education that an annual student success conference provides a forum for sharing information.
- **Learning communities**—Another “hot initiative” in higher education is the establishment of interdisciplinary groups of courses or “team-taught” tracks of classes that focus on specific topics. These learning communities provide a natural environment for library participation and an opportunity to further information literacy agendas.
- **Distance learning**—Universities are immersed in the distance learning trend that will define higher education. Universities now grapple with issues that range from developing necessary infrastructure to offering distance learning, to curriculum development, teaching implications, and the assessment of learning in this environment.
- **Technology in the classroom**—Campus initiatives to increase the application of technology in the classroom affects every part of a campus. Academic computing centers, offices of instructional development, and individual schools and colleges are all interested in providing the necessary infrastructure and helping faculty develop the necessary skills to successfully apply technology to the curriculum.

Invert Your Thinking

As you review the “hot initiatives” on your campus, consider how these developments will affect the organization. I suggest a slightly different approach from traditional library efforts. Do not ask: *How can the information literacy agenda be integrated into this initiative?* Remember, all the individuals who participate in these initiatives are as passionate, as consumed, as engrossed in their efforts as you are about the information literacy initiative. They may not be predisposed to someone who is asking them for something. I suggest you *invert your thinking* and with a simple twist turn the sentence around and ask yourself: *How can the information literacy agenda help this initiative succeed?* Bring the answer to these individuals and offer to help them be successful.

As you develop strategies for establishing campus partnerships you have to identify the key campus initiatives and answer the question: *How can the information literacy agenda help this initiative succeed?*

Strategies for Partnerships

Here is a three-point plan for becoming involved in the important initiatives on your campus.

1) *Keep informed*

Minimally, be well informed about each initiative. Find committee charges, read reports, examine pertinent Web sites, be current with minutes of meetings, review any documentation, and read about specific projects. Apply research skills to expand your knowledge of the topic and become more informed.

2) *Meet the key people*

Identify the key people involved and secure an introduction or, if necessary, introduce yourself. Make a telephone call, set a lunch date, and demonstrate your interest in the initiative. Do not approach individuals with a hard sell for your own initiative. Listen and learn and then offer to help.

3) *Get involved*

You will be in a stronger position to identify the intersection between each initiative and information literacy if you are part of the campus effort. Volunteer for a project; serve on a committee or subcommittee. Use your connections to get involved. The opportunity will present itself, and at the right time and place you can step in and say, “I can help you to meet this objective and information literacy is part of the answer.”

Reflect for a moment upon the “hot initiatives” identified, and think about your campus efforts regard-

ing accreditation, writing across the curriculum, student retention, learning communities, distance learning, and technology in the classroom. You can identify how the information literacy agenda can advance the objectives of each of these initiatives. If you are well informed about the goals, objectives, and activities for each initiative, have established a working relationship with key players, and are part of the effort addressing that initiative, then you will be in an excellent position to help your campus initiative succeed and to use the information literacy agenda as part of the solution.

Faculty Development

Although it is important to develop strategies for forging partnerships between campus initiatives and information literacy, you also must consider the role of faculty in relationship to each initiative. Individual faculty are influenced by the organizational energy on issues such as distance learning, technology in the classroom, and learning communities. In many universities, faculty are encouraged to revise their syllabi, teaching styles, and assessment methodologies, as they address these issues. Librarians have an opportunity to use information literacy to help faculty succeed in their own objectives. Specific types of campus initiatives provide an opportunity for the library to play a leadership role with individual faculty development. How we succeed in this role is found in the answer to the question: *How can the information literacy agenda help faculty successfully address this important campus initiative?*

Information Literacy at Florida International University

Imagine a pattern formed by arrows, with each arrow curving and pointing in a different direction. The overall cluster of arrows presents a symmetrical pattern, despite the fact that each individual arrow indicates momentum in different and often opposing directions. The strategy for creating a campus culture for information literacy is not a single strategy, but many different strategies. They are not necessarily parallel, yet there is no chaos. There is a symmetry and an order to all this movement in seemingly unrelated directions. If you focus on just one arrow, the pattern is lost. But when you look at the total picture, the pattern is clear.

At Florida International University (FIU), librarians are engaged in a series of strategies to change the campus culture in various forums: within the library, the collective faculty, the university administration, and individual faculty members. The FIU process followed a series of planned steps.

Step One: Clarify Challenge of Information Literacy

Florida International University is the fastest growing public university in the state of Florida. FIU serves 30,000 students (18,000 fte). Eighty percent of the students are commuters and the majority transfer to FIU from community colleges or other schools. FIU is the third largest minority school in the United States, and the average age of an FIU student is 27.

The first step for FIU librarians required the definition of information literacy and the clarification of challenges inherent to the information literacy agenda. The goal was to prepare self-directed, lifelong learners as citizens for the information age. Librarians recognized that information consumers now function in an environment with more choices, where information seeking was more complex, where a lack of standardization and a proliferation of technologies required students to move beyond the basic computer skills and the technical skills to the areas of conceptual skills, and beyond that level to evaluation and critical thinking skills. Librarians also realized this focus on critical thinking skills required a fundamental shift from our traditional library instruction programs. The focus on critical thinking helped FIU move to the second step in our development.

Step Two: Identify Campus Partners

Once librarians realized that information literacy extended beyond library instruction, and that critical thinking was at the heart of information literacy, librarians soon realized that ownership of the information literacy challenge extended beyond libraries. Several potential campus partners were identified:

- undergraduate studies,
- academic computing,
- Academy for the Art of Teaching, and
- faculty and administration.

In considering the potential partners for FIU's information literacy initiative, librarians realized that a transition from a model of coordinating activities to a model of collaboration with partners was necessary. True collaboration means that both partners have equal ownership in the product. In a truly collaborative environment, participants must agree to a great deal of negotiation, a submission of egos, and a merging of agendas. Fortunately, librarians possessed extensive experience in coordinating library instruction programs with all these partners. FIU librarians already coordinated programs with freshman experience leaders, with freshman composition, and with academic computing. In order to broaden ownership of the information literacy agenda, librarians needed to move from a model of coordination to a model of collaboration.

Step Three: A New Approach to Collaboration

The centrality of teaching critical thinking skills as a part of information literacy also underscored the need to partner with the unit responsible for this activity. The mission of the Academy for the Art of Teaching, with its focus on helping faculty bring critical thinking into the classroom, made it the best choice for collaboration. The Information Literacy Initiative at Florida International University is now a collaborative service between the Academy for the Art of Teaching and the library. The selection of the program's name and the wording of the first brochure were the result of this collaboration. Information about the Information Literacy Initiative (ILI) can be found at <http://www.fiu.edu/~library/ili/ilibroc.html> > .

Step Four: The Information Literacy Initiative Model

As the library and the Academy for the Art of Teaching began a collaboration to form the Information Literacy Initiative, a model developed that reflects both parties' interests in faculty development as related to information literacy. Information literacy occurs at the intersection of teaching, thinking, and learning, within the broader environment of technology. Both the academy and the library encourage faculty to develop the critical thinking skills of students. Information literacy provides the vehicle for developing those critical thinking skills.

Step Five: Multiple Strategies for Influencing Campus Culture

Earlier reference to campus culture and information literacy noted strategies for influencing campus culture in three forums within the university: the library, the faculty, and the university administration. Once the Information Literacy Initiative (ILI) became institutionalized through the formation of a new collaborative service between the library and the Academy for the Art of Teaching, staff members from both organizations pursued strategies to promote the information literacy agenda.

Information Literacy and the University Administration

As ILI staff considered ways to enhance information literacy objectives in the culture of the university administration, they reinforced the effort to "invert their thinking." First, ILI staff identified four important campus initiatives:

- SACS Accreditation,
- the Strategic Plan,
- Student Retention,
- Technology in the Classroom.

Personal initiatives were put aside as involvement in each of these four initiatives was expanded.

Southern Association of College and Schools Accreditation

As a member of Undergraduate Council, a faculty senate committee that deals with the core curriculum, the author was positioned to participate in accreditation discussions. Within the issue of core competencies for students, the interpretation of language in the Southern Association of College and Schools (SACS) criteria supported the review of computer skills for FIU students, and led to the introduction of information literacy skills. In discussions between Undergraduate Council members and librarians over several meetings, participating faculty addressed the issue of accreditation language and the actions of other regional accreditation bodies. The author undertook a research project for these colleagues and explained the type of computer literacy skills incorporated in information literacy skills and "how and why" an information literacy competency requirement could help anticipate changes in the accreditation criteria. As a result of this process, the author produced a document, at the request of the Undergraduate Council, for an information literacy project. This information literacy proposal suggests a sequence of instruction for all undergraduates at FIU, with four class sessions for the lower division and three class sessions for the upper division. Undergraduate Council unanimously approved this document and the proposal has been forwarded to the Faculty Senate for a vote. This document also is being introduced at various academic departments, and at the Council of Deans, in order to encourage campus dialogue.

Strategic Plan

The second initiative involved the FIU strategic plan titled "Reaching for the Top." A review of this plan sought to locate language that addressed information literacy skills or referred to any requirement of students to have information literacy competencies. This review identified a wonderful quote from FIU President Mitch Maidique, who stated, "When ubiquitous computing arrives, we will be limited, not by the quantity of information but by its quality, and our ability to retrieve, manipulate, and analyze it." Librarians are now able to refer to the FIU strategic plan to support our other efforts on campus.

Student Retention: The Freshman Experience

A third initiative selected for review was student retention, specifically the freshman experience class. Librarians were integral participants in the development of the freshman experience course. As an instructor for this course and a member of its curriculum steering

committee, the author was well positioned to speak to faculty and administrators involved in this initiative. Service as a volunteer in a faculty workshop for new faculty who teach the course, the development of instructional materials, and experiments with course design led to experimentation with the content of the course to include stronger information literacy components. As a result of this effort, plans exist to further revise the curriculum to include an information literacy slant and to work with the associate dean on developing longitudinal assessment models. This success did not start as a library initiative of “How can we integrate information literacy into the freshman experience?” Rather the process required that a librarian take ownership of the goals and objectives of improving student retention in freshman experience courses. This process created a situation in which information literacy appeared as part of the solution to extant challenges.

Information Literacy and the Faculty

ILI staff focus on ways that information literacy can help faculty function more successfully in the classroom. When considering the design of consultation services and workshop series, two issues arise:

- **Libraries can offer an important service for faculty, whether instructors are technophiles or technophobes**—For some teaching faculty, technology serves as a “hook” that encourages attendance at library workshops. FIU librarians merge sophisticated technology with serious content. Other faculty, who may otherwise resist workshops on technology, find library workshops appealing due to the research component. Technology then appears as the medium they must manage to sharpen their research skills. In many cases, library workshops are better attended than faculty workshops developed by other units on campus because the library content has broader appeal.
- **Librarians have experience**—Librarians have taught in “wired classrooms” for years, first with instructor stations and presentation software, and more recently with hands-on workstations for students. FIU librarians have met the challenge of shifting from passive lectures to active learning. In addition, FIU librarians have met the challenges posed by the classroom management of 30 students, facing computer screens. Librarians facilitate learning by creating an environment for collaboration in a classroom. Expertise at “glitch management” is a quickly acquired and invaluable asset. Librarians also develop teaching skills that

are shared with faculty as classroom environments evolve to incorporate more technology.

The following faculty workshop series is the result of a brainstorming session between the library and the Academy for the Art of Teaching. The list highlights challenges that teaching faculty face in the classroom:

- 1) **Motivating Students: Using Information Technology and Critical Thinking Strategies to Engage Students in Course Content;**
- 2) **Power Assignments: Using Technology and Information-Based Assignments to Enhance Student Learning;**
- 3) **Information Literacy: The Doorway to the Disciplines;**
- 4) **Teaching for Transfer: Reflection on Learning as the Key to Long-Term Retention;**
- 5) **Assessing Information Literacy;**
- 6) **Information Literacy and Intellectual Development;**
- 7) **Plagiarism, Cheating, and Information Literacy; and**
- 8) **Information Literacy and the Academy Culture.**

These workshops reflect a true collaboration between the library and the Academy for the Art of Teaching. Neither unit possesses the expertise to develop and offer the workshops alone, yet as a team, librarians and academy staff can focus on areas of mutual concern, and information literacy is once more the vehicle that addresses these issues.

Information Literacy and the Library

The library is the third campus environment whose organizational culture must reflect the information literacy agenda. At FIU, the library mission statement was revised to include stronger language to support information literacy. The strategic plan also highlights information literacy objectives. Departmental and individual librarian goals and objectives reflect teaching objectives. As a group, librarians develop information literacy outcomes for student learning, and individual subject specialists draft objectives and outcomes for upper-division sequences of classes in their subject areas.

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future. In spite of these issues, it has been an exhilarating experiment in exploring innovative approaches to instruction and has expanded the horizons of the library's instructional programs.

WWW Sites

McHenry Library Virtual Tour <<http://bob.ucsc.edu/library/tour>>

The Library Starter Kit (contains links to The Virtual Tour, Constructing Your Research Paper, Subject Guides, Workshops, and the UCSC NetTrail) <<http://bob.ucsc.edu/library/ref/instruction/skit>>

McHenry Library Instruction <<http://bob.ucsc.edu/library/ref/instruction>>

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Questions to Consider

As you develop your own strategies for establishing campus partnerships and consider the role of your library in campus faculty development efforts, consider the following questions:

- What is your vision for information literacy?
- Who are your potential campus partners?
- What are the important initiatives on your campus?
- How can you help those initiatives succeed?

- How can you help faculty succeed?

Once you answer these questions, you will be well on your way to developing a strategy to help your campus initiatives succeed and to advance your information literacy agenda.

NOTES

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9. Shulman, 181.

10. Palmer, 8.

11. Pat Hutchings, "Breaking the Solitude of Teaching," *Metropolitan Universities* 5 (1994): 22.

1. *American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy, Final Report* (Chicago: American Library Association, 1989).

2. Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1985), 2.

12. Boyer Commission on Educating Undergraduates in the Research University, *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities* (5 May 1998): <<http://notes.cc.sunysb.edu/Pres/boyer.nsf/>> (20 June 1998); Diane M. Enerson, *Creating a Community of Teachers: The Penn State Course in College Teaching*, June 1996, Document Reproduction Service No. ED4000253; Pat Hutchings, "Breaking the Solitude of Teaching," *Change* 25:6 (1993): 14-21; and Palmer.

13. Hutchings, 19-20.

14. Robert J. Menges, "Fostering Faculty Motivation to Teach: Approaches to Faculty Development," *Teaching Well and Liking It*, ed. by James L. Bess (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), 410.

15. Palmer, 13.