

Building faculty-librarian partnerships to prepare students for information fluency

The time for sharing information expertise is now

by Hannelore B. Rader

Educators in the 21st century must prepare students effectively for productive use of information, especially on the postsecondary level. Students will need to graduate from higher education institutions with the appropriate information skills to allow them to become productive citizens in the workplace and in society. Technology is having a major impact on society; in economics, e-business is moving to the forefront; in communication, e-mail, the Internet, and cellular phones have reformed how people communicate; in the work environment, computers and Web utilizations are emphasized; and in education, virtual learning and teaching are becoming more important. These are a few examples of how the 21st-century information environment requires future members of the workforce to be information fluent so they:

- have the ability to locate information efficiently.
- evaluate information for specific needs.
- organize information to address issues.
- apply information skillfully to solve problems.
- use information to communicate effectively.
- use information responsibly to ensure a productive work environment.

Individuals can achieve information fluency by acquiring cultural, visual, computer, technol-

ogy, research, and information management skills to enable them to think critically.

The higher education environment

New technology and electronic information are having a major impact on higher education, and faculty are experiencing the pressure of this impact strongly. They have to acquire new sets of skills to teach effectively in this high-technology information environment, where students are often more technologically savvy than their instructors. New learning communities are evolving based on the necessity that learning must be continuous on all levels, at all ages, and must include resource-based learning. Additionally, faculty are being challenged by higher education boards and accreditation groups to assess the learning outcomes of their students in a very specific and practical manner, differently from past student evaluation methods. Educators need to look closely at the business world, where strategic advantages are based on learning and teaching organizations to take advantage of evolving technology, the Internet, the global marketplace, and the new economy.

Librarians' contributions to the higher education environment

In the present, educationally challenging environment, academic librarians have many exciting op-

About the author

Hannelore B. Rader is dean of university libraries at the University of Louisville, h.rader@louisville.edu

© 2004 Hannelore B. Rader

portunities to work with faculty and students in a variety of new and creative ways. Librarians have been closely associated with developments in the digital environment and remain on the forefront of the technological information environment. Academic librarians have developed diverse technology skills and specialized expertise, which have enabled them to assume leadership opportunities in the higher education environment. They are building partnerships on campus for faculty development, distance education, information technology, student support, and assessment of learning outcomes. They are making the library the center for teaching, learning, and research on the campus by providing the most inviting and accessible information environment. Above all, they strive to ensure that all students learn appropriate information skills to help them achieve information fluency and become productive members of the information society.

To accomplish this, academic librarians are forming various types of partnerships with the teaching faculty to integrate information skills instruction throughout the undergraduate and graduate curricula and to help faculty to assess student learning outcomes. Thanks to the development of the "ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education,"¹ learning outcomes for students in higher education related to the five information skills standards, twenty-two performance indicators, and eighty-seven outcome measurements can be effectively measured.

Information fluency can be defined as the ability to navigate information structures and to evaluate information retrieved through these information structures. Information fluency includes library literacy, media literacy, computer literacy, Internet literacy, research literacy, and critical thinking skills.

Librarian-faculty partnerships

Since students need to be involved in more resource-based learning activities and should assume responsibility for locating and assessing the materials upon which they should base their learning, faculty have to acquire appropriate teaching methods to ensure such outcomes. The TLT Group (Teaching, Learning, and Technology), formerly an affiliate of the American Association for Higher Education, works with academic librarians to provide programming related to teaching information skills. In partnership with ACRL, TLT currently offers a series of online information literacy seminars that encourage participation by teaching faculty and librarians.

Teaching information skills includes much preparation, including such activities as developing teaching modules for undergraduates, subject majors, and graduate and professional programs. It also involves customizing teaching to appropriate student levels and students' existing knowledge bases.

Creating a successful learning environment is also crucial for success. This includes a user-friendly physical environment, diverse electronic information access, appropriate state-of-the-art technology classrooms, and librarian-faculty cooperation and interaction. Additionally, librarians and their faculty partners must work together to ensure that students receive guidance and assistance at the time of need in a collaborative learning and problem-solving learning environment.

Effects of teaching information skills

Various accrediting agencies have recognized the importance of information literacy in the curricula of colleges and universities and the important role librarians should assume in the teaching-learning environment by including appropriate criteria for outcome measurements regarding information literacy in the accreditation requirements. Most noteworthy for their work with information literacy in higher education is the Commission on Higher Education, Middle States Association of College and Schools. Working with the ACRL and the National Forum on Information Literacy, the commission has surveyed 830 institutions nationwide to explore the status of initiatives regarding information literacy. They found that educational institutions in the middle states are leading the nation in applying information literacy strategies on campuses. Several of these institutions have developed formal assessment strategies for measuring information literacy outcomes.³

In 1995 the California State Universities (CSU) Commission on Learning Resources and Instructional Technology issued a report entitled "Information Competence in the CSU,"⁴ which recommends policy guidelines for the effective use of learning resources and instructional technology. Information competency is one major area identified for which recommendations are provided. Among the many factors considered are cooperative ventures between the universities, community colleges, and primary and secondary schools to help all students become information literate. Also recommended were close collaborations between faculty and librarians. The report provides a number of useful suggestions to establish an

effective information competence program within CSU:

- Undertake a systematic assessment of student information competence to develop benchmarks.

- Develop model list of information competence skills for students entering the university and graduating from the university. Establish agreement with K-14 on these skills.

- Develop pilot information competence programs or courses on several campuses.

- Develop a "teaching the teachers" program so that faculty development in information competence can occur.

- Develop computer software that enables the teaching of information competence.

- Work with the community colleges and support their ongoing information competence initiative.

- Collaborate with textbook publishers to help with the integration of the concepts of information competence into textbooks.

- Pilot a distance-learning effort with information competence.

These examples from higher education begin to document concerns related to educating students to become effective in the information age by helping them gain information and critical thinking skills. Nationwide academic librarians are realizing the importance of training students in the use of information and that such training must

become integrated into the higher education curriculum. This is the time for academic librarians to become actively involved in curriculum development on their campuses. This is also the time for academic librarians to work with faculty in rethinking their teaching styles from lecture mode to interactive, resource-based, and collaborative modes of instruction.

In many academic institutions, centers for teaching excellence are being created to help faculty rethink their teaching styles in terms of the electronic environment and student learning needs. Often these centers are rightfully located in the library and provide opportunities for librarians to form partnerships with teaching faculty for curriculum development and new teaching initiatives. The higher education environment now offers academic librarians opportunities as never before to demonstrate their expertise in information handling and user training and to become involved in the teaching/learning process on the campuses.

Expected outcomes of teaching information skills are to help students:

- become lifelong learners; acquiring critical thinking skills.

- become effective and efficient users of all types of information.

- use information responsibly.

- be effective in doing research.

- become productive members of the workforce.

Examples of online models for library service and initiatives

- Kentucky Virtual Library, www.kyvl.org

- California State University-San Marcos, library.csusm.edu/departments/ilp/

- University of California-Berkeley, www.lib.berkeley.edu/TeachingLib/

- Florida International University, library.fiu.edu/assistance/tutorials/index.html

- University of Louisville, www.louisville.edu/infoliteracy

- University of Washington, washington.edu/uwired

- University of Wisconsin-Parkside, oldweb.uwp.edu/library/2003/intro/index.htm

- University of Minnesota, tutorial.lib.umn.edu

- Western Michigan University, www.wmich.edu/library/searchpath/index.html

Achieving productive information use in the global environment

The emergence and rapid growth of the Internet have created much interest and need on the part of students to gain access to electronic information and to become information literate. The need to find, organize, assess, and apply information to problem solving is a national as well as an international concern. Given the ease and speed with which information can now be shared, it is advisable that librarians and educators cooperate and share their expertise and experience not only locally and nationally but also internationally. To prepare both librarians and teachers for educating students in the information age, the following factors need to be considered:

- Information changes continually.

- Learning and teaching must be interactive and recognize diversity in learning styles.

- Teaching and training must be a process of facilitating and sharing, rather than dispensing.

(continued on page 80)

Fifth Print Edition

An acclaimed reference— new and updated.

Special Prepublication Savings!

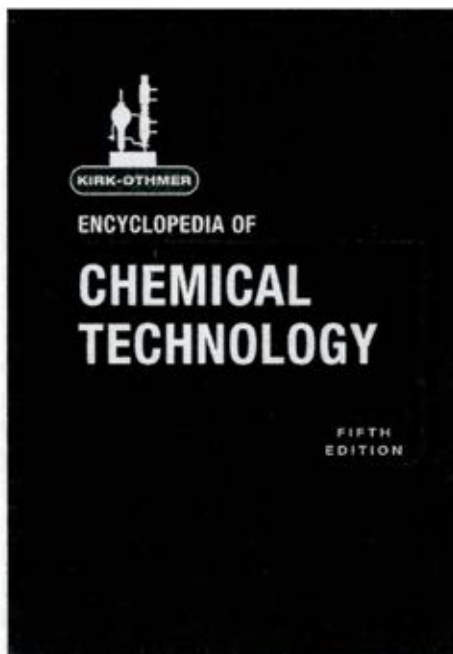
"The most indispensable reference in the English language on all aspects of chemical technology—the best reference of its kind."

—*Chemical Engineering News*
on the *Fourth Edition*

"Absolutely essential for all institutions with programs in chemistry, chemical engineering, biotechnology, and related areas."

—*CHOICE* on the
Fourth Edition

The *Kirk-Othmer Encyclopedia of Chemical Technology* has been a mainstay since publication of the first edition in 1949. The new *Fifth Edition* builds on the earlier editions with a wide scope of articles reflecting the many changes and developments in chemical technology.



- Set begins publication in January 2004
- Over 1,000 articles in 27 volumes
- More than 600 new or updated articles

Order the complete 27-volume set from your vendor today. Pay now and **SAVE 20%** off list price!

0-471-48494-6 • Cloth
22,950 pp.
January 2004
List: \$6,750.00

Yours for just \$5,400.00!
You save \$1,350.00

Or receive the volumes on a standing-order basis and **SAVE 10%** off the list price!

0-471-48810-0 • Cloth
22,950 pp.
January 2004
List: \$6,750.00

Standing Order for just \$6,075.00
You save \$675.00



Available through your vendor

 **WILEY**
Publishers Since 1807

we looked at ways to bring this program to our new institutions and continue to improve upon the concept.

Adapting the program

The program we developed at DePauw is adaptable to other institutions. At one of our present institutions, Southeast Missouri State University, a group of students similar to APAs called Community Advisors (CAs) was easily identified. At Southeast, a campus of approximately 9,000 students, CAs serve a very supportive role. And like many other institutions, most first-year students at Southeast live on campus.

The CAs are undergraduate students who live on each residence hall floor and act as resources, facilitate student development, and provide programming “. . . for student education and interaction.”³ Again this is a group of influential students who are part of the daily social sphere of students living in the residence halls. Residence Life at Southeast welcomed interaction with the library. At approximately 75 students, the size of the CA group makes developing a program a bit more challenging, but it was still fairly easy to arrange a brief training and discussion session with the CAs during their training week in the summer of 2002 and to keep in contact with them throughout the school year. As with the APAs at DePauw, the CAs were also introduced to an online tool—the Kent Library Walking Tour—that they could use and refer fellow students to 24/7.

Benefits

Tapping into a natural student social space and network, such as campus living units, can open up new ways for librarians to integrate information literacy into our students' daily lives and activities. Creating a relationship with a group of students who are engaged in mentoring roles in residence halls is of particular value. These students are well-positioned to influence other students, from how they view the library to what resources they use when working on class assignments and projects. They serve dual roles, as both a peer and a leader, particularly in relation to first-year students, and have access to fellow students in ways library instruction programs simply do not. Partnering with other campus units, such as Residence Life, can enhance library integration on campuses large and small. They can help us in numerous ways to understand our students, enabling us to shape programs and activities to suit the way our students live.

Notes

1. OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc., “How Academic Librarians Can Influence Students' Web-Based Information Choices,” *OCLC White Paper on the Information Habits of College Students* (June 2002), www5.oclc.org/downloads/community/informationhabits.pdf (accessed January 2004).

2. “Academic Peer Assistants,” (DePauw University, Residence Life, 2003), www.depauw.edu/student/housing/apa.asp (accessed January 2004).

3. “Welcome to living on campus! Community Advisors,” (Southeast Missouri State University, Office of Residence Life, 2003), www4.semo.edu/reslife/North_CA.htm (accessed January 2004). ■

(“Building faculty...” continued from page 76)

- Information work is becoming more and more competitive.
- Librarians and teachers must market themselves aggressively as information experts.
- Information is a commodity and must be handled like a valuable product.
- Teachers and trainers must be continuous learners.
 - Effective teaching uses learning outcomes and behavioral goals.
 - Good teaching is based on student need.
 - Information skills must be integrated into the curriculum and taught incrementally.
 - Teachers and librarians must work with accrediting and education agencies and curriculum planners to ensure that information skills become a required component of the curriculum.

Conclusion

This is a brief summary of the changing philosophy, which will predominate in academic and research environments of the future. The future is hard to define and planning is difficult because changes are occurring rapidly. Academic and research libraries will continue to be the centers within universities if they offer up-to-date information environments and efficient access to any kind of information, address user needs, and take a leadership role in training the university community in efficient and effective information handling.

This is not the time for academic librarians to be timid or to wait patiently for new developments. On the contrary, it is the time for them to become aggressive and dynamic participants in the

(continued on page 83)

ers and problem solvers early on the first day. Even for a bunch of gregarious library leaders, it was simply amazing.

Learn, reflect, and apply

In the wake of a week of focused readings, guided discussions, and the intentional interaction with peer colleagues, the institute ended with an evaluation of the experience.

Having spoken with many participants who had attended one of the four earlier Institutes, it is clear that in the fifth year the overall program quality and pedagogical dynamic not only had been sustained, earlier years, in fact, had built on one another, enriching the latest iteration of this rewarding professional opportunity. As with earlier institutes, the 2003 class spoke of valuing the fluid nature of the experience; the balance between small and large group activities; the opportunity to be center stage with a group of gifted instructors; and the often candid sharing and palatable sense of collegiality evidenced among the seven or eight individuals who gathered early each morning in the various small reflection groups. Perhaps the only minor criticism anyone had of the program was the meager time given over to coffee breaks. A sip of coffee, perhaps a quick phone call or e-mail check and we were hustled back into our high-tech fishbowl of learning.

As planning for the next institute (August 8–13, 2004) commences, it is already certain that future participants will leave that experience, as did the 2003 class, with a profound sense of the immense changes shaping both our profession and higher education. As leaders we must make increasingly compelling cases

(“*Building faculty...*” continued from page 80) campus community’s teaching, learning, and research agendas. They must share their information expertise with their campus community and build productive partnerships with teaching faculty. There are numerous examples in the nation where academic librarians have become leaders on their campuses. On some campuses librarians have become campus information officers, on other campuses they have become high-level administrators to foster information technology, assessment, and faculty development. Other models can be developed, and only the lack of imagination can stop academic librarians from becoming leaders on their campus.

There are no limits for academic librarians in the 21st century, there are, however, endless op-

portunities. “The future looks bright for librarians who embrace their emergent roles as teachers and scholars. In many ways, technology is a vehicle for expanding the librarian’s sphere of influence and collaboration with teaching and research faculty is certainly one of the key elements to the profession’s future.”⁵

for change long before the need to do so becomes desperately obvious. I call this strategic resilience.

Within our information organizations much of the response to this need for organizational resilience, sadly, has been scripted: strands of nostalgia for what is (and what was), elements of denial regarding deep secular trends in our competitive environment, and an arresting arrogance rooted in the powerful political constituencies of legacy programs. Today, organizational renewal (indeed transformation) must be a natural consequence of an organization’s innate resilience in the face of rampant challenge.

Many of our current models of both change and leadership focus on *working to get better* as opposed to *working to get different*. I would argue that we must be about the latter if we are to hope to confront incipient trends and embrace emergent opportunities for our students and faculty. Fundamentally, the ACRL/Harvard Leadership Institute is about helping leaders think about their organizations by employing compelling new language and metaphor as a means of framing and energizing organizational transformation and gaining facility in the use of tested techniques and strategies, ultimately to be placed in our evolving managerial tool kits.

Notes

1. Lee B. Bolman and Terrance F. Deal, *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership*. 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997).
2. Robert Kegan and Lisa Lahey, *How the Way We Talk Can Change the Way We Work*. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2001). ■

portunities. “The future looks bright for librarians who embrace their emergent roles as teachers and scholars. In many ways, technology is a vehicle for expanding the librarian’s sphere of influence and collaboration with teaching and research faculty is certainly one of the key elements to the profession’s future.”⁵

Notes

1. ACRL’s “Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education.” (Chicago: American Library Association, 2000). Visit www.acrl.org/infolit.
2. For more information on the TLT Group visit: www.tltgroup.org.

(continued on page 90)

information literacy initiatives, such as the Institute for Information Literacy National Immersion Program;

- the development of a new strategic plan to reposition ACRL for an even stronger future; and
- partnership with our members to assure member satisfaction and retention.

Goals

I would be delighted to work on your behalf as ACRL President to continue the fine traditions of ACRL and to explore new avenues to develop academic librarians of the future.

I would bring to this position a strong belief in the importance of communication; in getting relevant and timely information to members; in the health and growth of our association, including anticipation of new constraints on and possibilities for revenues and the increasing cost of providing products and services; in the exercise of reasonable care in making decisions; in sensitivity to differing views; and in strong collaboration among members and among external partners.

The strength of ACRL is its members. Member satisfaction and retention are critical. Building lasting relationships with our members must be a priority. We need to demonstrate a strong commitment to the continuing exploration of member priorities and needs, including how to attract new professionals to ACRL. Ongoing reconnection with members to create a shared future that is more secure than either could have built alone and creation of additional incentives and benefits for members to retain their memberships are critical for the future of ACRL.

I would work closely with the ACRL Board of Directors and ACRL members, committees, sections, discussion groups, task forces, and chapters to address member concerns and issues and to strengthen ACRL's programs and activities, especially those that increase the innovation and leadership of academic librarians. ACRL must be the foremost collaborative organization that inspires innovation and leadership and explores ways in which libraries can invent their future, such as an Inventing the Future Think Tank. A think tank would build on the recommendations of the current Task Force of the Association of the Future and identify important areas of future exploration for the academic enterprise; provide an in-depth exploration of future events, trends, and developments shaping the enterprise and profession; and help develop strategic implications.

I would bring to the leadership of ACRL a continuing emphasis in changing the world of

scholarly communication. ACRL needs to be a leading player in ensuring that scholarly communication embraces wide access, fair pricing, permanence, and fair use and in continuing to create new models for scholarly publishing through education, advocacy, coalition-building, and research.

In furthering diversity and inclusion in our profession and our association, I would propose an ACRL Diversity Grant Program that would help academic and research libraries foster an environment that encourages a strong commitment to diversity in the workplace and provide grant opportunities for an international exchange/collaboration between ACRL members and international librarians to support attendance at international library association meetings and at the ALA Annual Conference.

ACRL has a vital role to assist libraries with maximizing their knowledge assets. The more we can harness and maximize these assets the greater a role we can play in creating competitive advantage on our campuses. Teaching information literacy to educate future knowledge workers, learning for professional development and growth, and supporting standards and outcomes measures to assess and improve the effectiveness and future direction of academic libraries need to be ongoing priorities.

Lastly, I would work to build an even stronger sense of advocacy to fight the many challenges ahead for academic libraries. It is critical that we advocate for public policy, legislation, and institutional change that can enhance the value and contribution we make to learning, teaching, and research. It is especially essential to position academic libraries and librarians as critical educational, economic, and social forces to make a difference in lifelong learning.

The future for academic and research libraries is an exciting and challenging one. I am honored to stand for this position and would be delighted to serve as ACRL President and to work with all of you. ■

(“Building faculty...” continued from page 83)

3. O. M. T. Ratteray and H. L. Simmons. (1995) *Information Literacy in Higher Education*. (Philadelphia: Commission on Higher Education), 1.

4. Commission on Learning Resources and Instructional Technology (1995). *Information Competence in the CSU*. A Report, 19–21.

5. D. Raspa and D. Ward, *The Collaborative Imperative*, 2000 (Chicago: Association of College and Research Librarians), 153–54. ■