1-19-2000

New Learners, New Models: Cultivating an Information Literacy Program. A presentation for the University of Rhode Island Council of Deans.

Mary C. MacDonald
University of Rhode Island, marymac@uri.edu

Joanna M. Burkhardt
University of Rhode Island, jburkhardt@uri.edu

Andrée J. Rathemacher
University of Rhode Island, andree@uri.edu

Recommended Citation

New Learners, New Models:
Cultivating an Information Literacy Program

A presentation for the University of Rhode Island Council of Deans

January 19, 2000

Mary C. MacDonald • Joanna M. Burkhardt
Andrée J. Rathemacher

Information Literacy Definition

1989 American Library Association President's Report recommends a learning process that actively involves students in:

- knowing when they have an information need

- identifying information needed to address a given problem or issue

- finding the needed information

- evaluating the information found

- organizing the information found

- using information effectively to address the issue at hand

National Forum on Information Literacy

- Membership includes (partial list):
  - American Association of University Professors (AAUP)
  - American Association of Higher Education (AAHE)
  - U.S. Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
  - College Board
  - EDUCAUSE
  - National Education Association (NEA)
  - Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD)

Current Library Instruction Program at URI

- 1998/99 academic year:
  - Library instruction sessions taught: 325
  - Students receiving library instruction: 7,300
  - Librarians teaching instruction: 8
  - GSLIS student assistants: 3

Shortcomings of current Library Instruction Program

- Each class receives only 50 to 80 minutes of instruction
- Conceptual understanding of information is de-emphasized
- Students do not appear to retain the material
- Instruction is not systematic, depends instead on initiative of individual faculty members
- Some students receive multiple sessions, others receive none

Why do we want to change?

- In the Information Age students must know how to find and use the best and most up-to-date information possible for their research

- Research on transforming higher education stresses developing concepts of critical thinking and evaluation

- Resource-based learning, inquiry learning, problem-based learning, etc. are all involved in producing learning from within that will remain with students throughout their lives.

Information Literacy at the University of Rhode Island

URI Libraries responsibilities:

- Form an Advisory Information Literacy Council

- Develop a definition of Information Literacy for the University community

- Develop and introduce an incremental multi-tiered information literacy program

- Implement the program in consultation with teaching faculty from all areas of the curriculum

Library 140:

Special Topics in Information Literacy (1 credit)

- Uses workshop style setting and hands-on activities
- Covers information resources in a particular subject area
- Final project uses the resources and strategies taught
- Two sections were team-taught in spring semester 1999

Library 120:
Introduction to Information Literacy (3 credits)

- Teaches information gathering, evaluation, and application
- Course focuses on conceptual understanding of information
- Course emphasizes resource-based learning

Information Literacy —
What next?

- Are currently petitioning for LIB 120 to be a General Education option under University College and the Basic Liberal Studies Program of Arts & Sciences

- Have established URI Libraries Task Force on Teaching and Research

Conclusion

- Success will require a great deal of effort, collaboration, flexibility, and patience.
- Goal is to create a program that can provide the URI learning community with the concepts and skills necessary to master information in all its forms