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## New Learners, New Models: Information Literacy at the University of Rhode Island

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# **New Learners, New Models:** **Information Literacy at the University of Rhode Island**

**ACRL/NEC NEBIC Annual Program**

*June 9, 2000*

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

# 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.

# Goals & Objectives for an Information Literacy Plan

- Shift to model of Teaching Library
- Develop and introduce an incremental multi-tiered information literacy program based on defined learning goals at each level
- Incorporate variety of delivery options



# Goals & Objectives for an Information Literacy Plan, cont.

- Use Library Curriculum Committee to provide oversight
- Implement program in consultation with teaching faculty from all areas of the curriculum

*See [http://www.uri.edu/library/instruction\\_services/infolitplan.html](http://www.uri.edu/library/instruction_services/infolitplan.html)*

# Collaborative Efforts

- Library faculty
- Library administration
- Other university faculty willing to collaborate
- Faculty Senate for procedural advice
- Acting Dean, University College





# Collaborative Efforts, cont.

- Registrar for advice on scheduling times and places for instruction
- Council of Deans
- College of Continuing Education administration

# Models of instruction

- Modules / toolkits
- Credit courses
- Web tutorials
- Capstone portfolio
- Graduate and faculty workshops

# 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
- Fulfills General Education requirement in English Communications

# Future Plans

- Increase number of sections of LIB 120
- Increase number of instructors
- Reevaluate level of LIB 140
- Develop web-based tutorial on using library catalog
- Develop info lit modules for Master of Science in Labor Relations and Human Resources
- Increase collaboration with Graduate School of Library and Information Studies

# 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