Chapter 14
The Agile Teaching Library: Models for Integrating Information Literacy in Online Learning Experiences

Mariela Gunn
Oakland University, USA

Elizabeth W. Kraemer
Oakland University, USA

ABSTRACT

This chapter discusses several models of integrating information literacy instruction into computer-mediated learning processes on university campuses with an eye towards the sustainability of each model, its advantages and limitations, as well as its demands on both personnel and the institution as a whole. We strive to provide professionals with the insights to make informed decisions suitable for their context in terms of pedagogical outcomes, organizational resources, and technology infrastructure.

INTRODUCTION

Information literacy (IL) instruction refers to teaching students how to design a meaningful research process for themselves that meets the information needs of a specific project or assignment. The skills necessary for the effective, competent, and ethical use of research materials have been codified as information literacy standards by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). These standards include the skills of individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information" (American Library Association [ALA], 1989). The definition of information literacy is relevant well beyond the academic context, because it encompasses lifelong learning, as well as any other personal research pursuits. Higher education, however, offers a research-intensive context for students, making universities the perfect environment for teaching information literacy skills, thus

DOI: 10.4018/978-1-61350-077-4.ch014

Copyright © 2012, IGI Global. Copying or distributing in print or electronic forms without written permission of IGI Global is prohibited.

providing students with the conceptual tools needed to achieve academic excellence and to develop research habits that will enable self-directed learning throughout their lives.

ACRL last reviewed the information literacy standards in 2000, and the standards are currently being used as the foundation of information literacy programs in academic libraries throughout the United States. They have also been endorsed by the American Association for Higher Education and the Council of Independent Colleges (ACRL, 2010). Educational accrediting bodies, too, have come to recognize the fundamental and inter-disciplinary nature of information literacy skills. For example, the Middle States Commission on Higher Education, the Western Association of Schools and Colleges, and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools have all incorporated information literacy as a key component of student learning (Yang, 2009, p. 684). Given the central role of information literacy to student learning across the disciplines, special attention ought to be brought to the manner in which academic librarians incorporate such instruction in the ever-increasing number of courses offered online and within hybrid courses that offer varying degrees of computer-mediated instruction. A conceptualization of various integration models that together comprise an agile information literacy program can aid librarians, subject faculty, and administrators in navigating the pedagogical and organizational choices involved in creating a rich, student-centered learning experience in relation to information literacy skills. Each model constitutes but one facet of an information literacy program that enables students to become better researchers and life-long learners.

Traditionally, information literacy instruction has happened within university classes at the request of a specific subject faculty member, who invites a librarian to teach a research session relating to a course assignment. The librarian's teaching objectives have focused on a few key information literacy competencies, such as generating appropriate keywords for a topic and finding relevant information in the library catalog and databases. Rapid technology changes, along with an abundance of information available both freely on the web and in databases subscribed to by the library, have highlighted the need to find ways of teaching all information literacy competencies, including the evaluation of resources and their ethical use. In effect, changes in the research context have shifted librarians' focus from teaching tools and strategies to teaching the overall research process and the critical thinking skills needed to manage it. Integrating information literacy instruction into subject courses necessitates approaches that go beyond the traditional one-class visit.

Classroom-based instruction uses traditional pedagogies to teach a computer-mediated research process that encompasses digital versions of materials and diverse interfaces for accessing both physical and digital collections. The explosion of online publications and digitized versions of print publications increase the need for information literacy skills. Computer-mediated research introduces the need to understand how the print world is structured and to then apply critical judgments to digital publications based on that knowledge. Students required to use peer-reviewed scholarship in their research assignments, for instance, might be faced with online texts that look visually similar to many free websites, but which in fact constitute the online versions of articles published in peer-reviewed, print-based journals. Computer-mediated communication (CMC) and its attendant technologies have transformed the research context by offering immediacy of online access combined with the added burden to be all the more discerning and knowledgeable in selecting appropriate sources of information.

In addition, web-based information literacy instruction poses further pedagogical challenges in teaching the complexities of the research process, not only by introducing CMC technologies into teaching itself, but also by positioning library faculty as embedded visitors within online learning

14 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage:
www.igi-global.com/chapter/agile-teaching-library/60023

Related Content

Studying Online Communication Features on International and Cross-Cultural Web Pages Using Websphere Analysis Methodology
Kathryn Stam, Indira R. Guzman and Dennis Thoryk (2012). *Computer-Mediated Communication across Cultures: International Interactions in Online Environments (pp. 187-199).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/studying-online-communication-features-international/55569/

Discourse and Network Analyses of Learning Conversations
H. L. Lim and Fay Sudweeks (2008). *Handbook of Research on Computer Mediated Communication (pp. 451-476).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/discourse-network-analyses-learning-conversations/19765/

Filtering Online Content in China
Jyh-An Lee (2012). *Computer-Mediated Communication across Cultures: International Interactions in Online Environments (pp. 66-76).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/filtering-online-content-china/55561/

A Code of Ethical Conduct for Global Learning
(2011). *Anonymity and Learning in Digitally Mediated Communications: Authenticity and Trust in Cyber Education (pp. 22-38).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/code-ethical-conduct-global-learning/53387/

New Era, New Media, and New Strategies for Cross-Cultural Collaborative Learning
Chun-Min Wang, Jinn-Wei Tsao and Gretchen Bourdeau Thomas (2012). *Computer-Mediated Communication across Cultures: International Interactions in Online Environments (pp. 381-394).*
www.irma-international.org/chapter/new-era-new-media-new/55580/