Deep Engagement with Student Learning

Librarians as Instructors-of-Record for Writing-Intensive Undergraduate Courses
Question at issue:

*How do we gain authentic knowledge about how students apply IL skills and concepts?*
## Usual Roles:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>One-shot Sessions</th>
<th>For-Credit IL Courses</th>
<th>For-Credit Courses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1974</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td></td>
<td>22%</td>
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*Phelps, Senior & Diller, 2011; **Butterfield, 1974 qtd. by Phelps, et. al.*
We teach content *beyond* IL as instructors-of-record.

WHY?
Similarly to the 94% …

- Jean averages 18 – 27 IL sessions per semester
  - usually one-shot for upper division courses
  - 3 sessions for most first-year writing intensive courses (INQS)
- Susan (library director)
  - participates in first-year writing intensive courses (INQS)
  - upper division by request (esp. music & mass comm.)
But beyond the usual roles …

- Susan has a long-standing collaboration with Dr. Brenda Marshall’s first-year writing intensive Inquiry Seminar (INQS) course
- Women Suffragists in the United States
- One-shot has never been part of their approach
- 8 IL specific sessions integrated in this class.
Women Suffragists of the United States

8 Sessions: Embedded

Integrated library sessions with assignments

- Building blocks
- Knowledge base for library research
- How to THINK about using library resources
Assignment Example 1:

- Mother’s, grandmother’s, great-grandmother’s birthday.
- What were the headlines in the New York Times?
- Were there stories about women?
- What were the ads like (fashion, appliances...?)
Assignment Example 2:

• Find and Evaluate a Web Site
• Do this BEFORE learning to use the library’s core resources
• Criteria (Authority; Credibility)
• Apply to ALL types of sources
• “How do I fit my voice into this dialog?”
What the librarian learns.

• Small chunks make better sense for learners, i.e., scaffolded learning
• Embedded IL within larger assignments
• How hard it can be to begin discovery
• Students pay more attention when librarian attends their presentations
• Collaboration with faculty takes time and flexibility
Information Ethics INQS

• Jean teaches this every other spring semester
• 4 credit course
• Meets 3x per week + online components
• 18 students maximum
• IL is integrated incrementally
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTENT</th>
<th>WRITING</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INFORMATION</td>
<td>SPEAKING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LITERACY</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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Image created by Jean Caspers
Course Content

• Censorship v. Free Speech
• Intellectual Property v. Cultural Creativity
• Privacy v. Security
  • aka Freedom v. Control
ACRL Standard Five

“The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.”
Assignments:

• Blog posts & discussion
• Two short formal papers
• Group presentations
• 1 annotated bibliography
• Research Paper
• Multimedia project
What the librarian learns about first-year students:

• How eager they are to succeed.

• The extent to which some are better in writing than speaking, and vice versa.

• How difficult it is for many students to learn paraphrasing without plagiarism.
• How difficult it is to find the time to accomplish *skills* (citation styles, grammar, punctuation) and still cover the *content*.

• Students want more discussion time to grapple with the big ideas.

• The value of repetition, small chunks, & individual just-in-time consultations w/students.

• The importance of students’ making personal connections with the material.
With time so precious, giving time to a “guest lecturer” can seem very risky.
Information Gathering: Intro to the Mass Communication Major

• Final Product: 12-page essay with 22 annotated sources representing journals, magazines, newspapers, blogs, observations, interviews, books, non-profit institutions, government documents.
Content:

• US Policy Issues:
• DREAM Act
• No Child Left Behind
• Elementary School Cafeteria nutrition
• Immigration issues
• Energy issues (wind/solar; oil/fracking)
22 Annotations

• Main assertion
• Author background
• Strengths and weaknesses
• Compare and contrast
• How will I use this source in my argument?
• Why does this source matter to my research?
Approach

• Organic
• No lecture
• Peer edition
• Editing each weekly assignment in front of class
• Using current events
• Process, Process, Process
• Slow It Down. Think. Question. Evidence.
What the librarian learns:

Students remember next to nothing from INQS
Students want to grab the low-hanging fruit
Thinking is hard and takes time
Writing is even harder and takes even more time
Repetition matters: writing editing proofing
Team-teaching: patience, humor, presence
Grading/reading: takes time and thought
Discovery is not as difficult as finding the best sources
Hard Work pays off for students
Time Management
Constant relationship building
Why does this matter for us?