Proven Strategies for Building an Information Literacy Program

Edited by
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In Memory of Ilene Rockman, 1950–2005, because her passion for information literacy inspired so many.
# Contents

List of Figures ................................................................. vii  
Foreword ................................................................. ix  

*Hannelore B. Rader*  
Preface ................................................................. xi  

*Susan Carol Curzon and Lynn D. Lampert*  
Acknowledgments ............................................................... xv  

Chapter 1: Getting to Goals: New Influences on the Role of Goals  
in Active and Sustainable Information Literacy Programs ............... 3  

*Randall Burke Hensley*  
Chapter 2: Defining Information Literacy: Conceptual Models  
and Practice ................................................................. 13  

*Sarah McDaniel*  
Chapter 3: Beyond the Fashionable: Strategic Planning for Critical  
Information Literacy Education ........................................... 29  

*Judith Peacock*  
Chapter 4: Using Cultural Perspectives to Foster Information  
Literacy Across the Curriculum ........................................... 55  

*Scott Walter*  
Chapter 5: Readiness and Rhythm: Timing  
for Information Literacy ................................................... 77  

*Eleanor Mitchell*  
Chapter 6: Searching for Respect: Academic Librarians’ Role  
in Curriculum Development ............................................... 95  

*Lynn D. Lampert*  
Chapter 7: Librarian Readiness and Pedagogy .......................... 113  

*Jeff Liles*
Chapter 8: In Search of Excellence: Qualities of a Library Teaching Model .............................................. 133
  Gabriela Sonntag

Chapter 9: The Challenge to Engage .............................. 147
  Margit Misangyi Watts

Chapter 10: Teaching Information Literacy: Context, Context, Context .............................................. 163
  Michael B. Eisenberg

Chapter 11: Collaboration .......................................... 177
  Kendra Van Cleave

Chapter 12: Collaboration to Ensure Mastery of Information Competence Skills ...................................... 193
  Rie Rogers Mitchell, Merril A. Simon, and Gregory C. Jackson

Chapter 13: Understanding Accreditation: Student Learning and Information Literacy ...................................... 213
  Stephanie R. Bangert

Chapter 14: An Administrative Perspective ......................... 229
  James L. Mullins

Chapter 15: Using Social Marketing to Promote Information Literacy .............................................. 239
  Janeanne Rockwell-Kincanon

Chapter 16: Information Literacy Program Development: The Role of Assessment ...................................... 257
  Bonnie Gratch-Lindauer

Chapter 17: The School Library Media Teacher as Information Literacy Partner ...................................... 279
  Lesley Farmer

Chapter 18: Information Literacy: A New Role for Public Libraries? ...................................................... 297
  Virginia A. Walter

Concluding Comments from the Editors .............................. 308
Recommended Readings ........................................... 311
Index ..................................................................... 315
About the Editors .................................................... 335
List of Figures

Figure 4-1: K–8 Teacher Education Curriculum, Washington State University, Academic Year 2002–2003 ......................... 66
Figure 6-1: Modes of Instruction Initiation .......................... 99
Figure 7-1: Theories of Learning ..................................... 122
Figure 7-2: Forming a Research Statement: Step 1 .............. 128
Figure 7-3: Forming a Research Statement: Step 2 .............. 128
Figure 7-4: Forming a Research Statement: Step 3 .............. 129
Figure 8-1: University as a Learning Community .................. 135
Figure 8-2: Daily Activities Record ................................. 142
Figure 10-1: Comparison of Information Skills Process Models ...... 166
Figure 10-2: The Big6 .................................................. 167
Figure 10-3: The Big6 as a Feedback Process ....................... 168
Figure 10-4: Technological Capabilities and the Big6 ............. 171
Figure 10-5: The Big6 and Technology ............................. 172
Figure 12-1: Information Competence Is ............................ 197
Figure 12-2: Information Competence Gestalt ...................... 198
Figure 13-1: Relationship of Accreditation and Information Literacy to Student Learning .............................. 217
Figure 14-1: Purdue University Letter and Survey Questions Sent to Directors .................................................. 237
Figure 15-1: Purchasers Model ....................................... 244
Figure 15-2: Public or NPO Model ................................... 244
Figure 15-3: Multiple Audiences Model ............................ 244
Figure 16-1: Program Elements with Potential Assessment Methods and Measures ............................... 270
Foreword

by Hannelore B. Rader

In the twenty-first century, information is generated more quickly than ever before. The Internet and other new tools have changed the ways in which people seek information. Academic institutions in the electronic age have also undergone a variety of changes in order to prepare students for productive futures in this new environment. Proven Strategies for Building an Information Literacy Program will help readers teach students how to successfully negotiate the technological and digital information environment.

Proven Strategies for Building an Information Literacy Program includes advice from an impressive array of leading information literacy authorities. For example, Sarah McDaniel defines information literacy as compared to library instruction. Australian author Judith Peacock discusses sustainability. Gabriela Sonntag addresses librarians’ significant and global role as full partners in student learning endeavors and Margit Misangyi Watts describes approaches that help librarians engage students in successful learning initiatives in higher education. Scott Walter writes on cultural impact, Eleanor Mitchell on timing, and Kendra Van Cleave on collaboration and partnerships. The work of these authors mentioned as well as the other excellent authors in this book combine to provide a broad yet practical view of information literacy.

This volume will be a significant addition to the continually expanding body of literature on teaching information skills to students. It provides readers with compelling analyses of the issues, with new thinking, and with clear directions to meet the challenges ahead. I know the wisdom in these pages will help readers develop an information literacy program that truly meets the needs of twenty-first century learners.
Many information literacy programs start with the best of intentions only to be defeated by politics, bad timing, lack of organizational readiness, or lack of administrative support. Librarians that fail to attend to such issues often are left frustrated, wondering why their program cannot get off the ground or, once launched, cannot really fly.

We believe that only a complete strategy will ensure the development, sustenance, and success of an information literacy program. While hundreds of articles and dozens of books have focused on one or several aspects of information literacy, we have designed *Proven Strategies for Building an Information Literacy Program* to address all aspects of this important topic. Our goal is to cover the full spectrum of information literacy issues, including the roles of school libraries and public libraries, which have not usually been discussed in other works to date. Twenty knowledgeable and experienced authors have contributed to this work, which we hope will be helpful both to librarians new to the field of information literacy and to librarians seeking to revive or improve existing programs.

In our introduction to each chapter, we share with the reader what makes each author uniquely qualified to comment on the particular topic. The contributors were chosen for their practical experience in information literacy and, as a group, reflect a wide range of backgrounds. Each contributor illustrates through research, experience, and examples the most important steps towards achieving information literacy success.

We include chapters focusing on school and public libraries in order to emphasize the importance of these institutions as partners for academic librarians. School libraries have an obviously critical role to play in teaching students...
foundational skills. University and college librarians look to school librarians to prepare students for the rigors of higher education.

Less recognized in the literature of information literacy is the role that public libraries can and should play. Clearly, public libraries serve many school-children and college students. When public librarians reinforce information literacy, students benefit from the additional exposure to these essential skills. Moreover, public libraries have a vast user base and frequently reach diverse audiences that may never have been exposed to information literacy instruction. There is little doubt that better information literacy skills could improve the lives of many members of the public, bringing them both concrete benefits and enjoyment.

**HOW TO USE THIS BOOK**

We developed the information literacy wheel, shown below and at the start of each chapter, to show that each element of an information literacy program is essential to the whole. Each of the 18 chapters in *Proven Strategies for Building an Information Literacy Program* focuses on a different segment of the wheel. As you read the book, the highlighted area of the wheel shown at the beginning of the chapter will remind you of that topic’s place in the overall development of a successful program.

The wheel starts on the top right with Randall Burke Hensley’s chapter on practical goals for information literacy programs in an academic environment. Sarah McDaniel then provides a comprehensive definition of information literacy.
Judith Peacock writes on planning for a sustainable program, while Scott Walter discusses information literacy’s cultural impact. Eleanor Mitchell advises readers on the importance of finding the best timing for an information literacy program. Lynn Lampert argues for the importance of academic librarians’ involvement in curriculum development.

Jeff Liles introduces new ways to better prepare librarians for teaching information skills. Gabriela Sonntag’s contribution shows a teaching model that includes librarians as significant partners, and Margit Misangyi Watts, on a related topic, demonstrates how librarians can truly engage students.

Michael Eisenberg’s chapter outlines a conceptual and practical approach to teaching information literacy. Kendra Van Cleave addresses the importance of collaboration and partnerships in successful information literacy endeavors.

Rie Rogers Mitchell, Merril Simon, and Gregory Jackson, three professors from California State University, Northridge, describe the role of faculty readiness and how it contributed to their collaboration, which integrated information literacy throughout the graduate curriculum.

Stephanie Bangert encourages academic institutions to go beyond the requirements of accreditation to self-evaluation of what students are really learning in information literacy programs. James Mullins provides an administrative perspective, weighing in on issues related to resources, spaces, political support, and time. Marketing, discussed by Janeanne Rockwell-Kincanon, is another important aspect of effective information literacy programs. Bonnie Gratch-Lindauer investigates the role of assessment and the key features of a useful and accurate assessment.

Finally, Lesley Farmer and Virginia Walter take us into the worlds of school and public libraries. Lesley Farmer addresses information literacy skills in the K–12 curriculum and how instructors can grab students’ interest. Virginia Walter discusses information literacy as a new initiative for public libraries.

We were delighted when Hannelore Rader accepted the invitation to write the foreword to our book. Hannelore’s international contribution to the field of information literacy is well-known. Her work in the groundbreaking “Information Literacy Standards for Higher Education” issued by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) was pivotal. She is the author of over 100 papers relating to information literacy and library administration. Hannelore has received many honors throughout her distinguished career, including the ACRL’s Miriam Dudley Award for Bibliographic Instruction and ACRL’s prestigious Academic and Research Librarian of the Year award in 1999. Since 1997, Hannelore has been the Dean of University Libraries at the University of Louisville in Kentucky. Her M.L.S. is from the University of Michigan, where Hannelore also received an M.A. in German Literature, as well as a teaching certificate. We thank Hannelore very much for writing this foreword.
We have tried to ease the journey towards a successful information literacy program by providing information, examples, and advice in a logical and practical order. The wheel will help you keep your eye on the big picture even as you improve the individual aspects and details of your library’s work. We hope that Proven Strategies for Building an Information Literacy Program will help you to effectively develop or sustain your own efforts.
Acknowledgments

We have dedicated this book as a special thanks and remembrance to Ilene Rockman, the manager of the Information Literacy Initiative at California State University (CSU). Her early passing saddened all who cared about the cause of information literacy and all who cared about a librarian who stood for excellence. Both of us were privileged and honored to work with Ilene.

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Many thanks also deservedly go to my family for their encouragement of both my work and research as an academic librarian. In addition to my husband, Andy, I particularly want to thank my mother, Frances Lampert, for her love and support, and my late father, Howard Lampert, who I believe would have been really proud of my decision to become a librarian. My sister, Dr. Lisa Lampert-Weissig, also deserves recognition for her consistent support of her little sister. Lastly, I have to acknowledge my two favorite muses, my beloved beagles Daisy and Gatsby, whose unconditional love and support mean the world to me.