

EDITOR'S NOTES

The problem colleges and universities are facing nationwide is one of lack of engagement on the part of students in their education. This lack of buy-in leads to problems with retention and graduation rate, not to mention loss of intellectual curiosity, which could lead to a less-informed citizenry. George Kuh, in the most recent National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), reports that what students do during college counts more in terms of desired outcomes than who they are or even where they go to college. He finds that the research on college student development shows that the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities is the single best predictor of their learning and personal development.

Human beings are by nature passionate, curious, and intrigued and will seek to connect, find patterns, and make sense of things. If this is the case, then a passion for learning is not something we should need to inspire in our students; rather, it is what we must keep from being extinguished. Learning is more effective when new information is made meaningful and linked to personal experience or prior knowledge; when we learn how to evaluate, assess, and connect, information is transformed into knowledge. Unfortunately, most undergraduates experience higher education in the traditional manner, which does not often include direct involvement in the creation of knowledge.

In its 1998 report *Reinventing Undergraduate Education*, the Boyer Commission recommended that students be given opportunities to learn through inquiry and that research-based learning should become the standard. Thus engagement of undergraduates in research and creative scholarship and provision of applied educational experiences, including service learning, are important imperatives for the future of higher education. Students regularly miss the relationship between the information-seeking process and actual creation of knowledge. An institution of higher education is a place where knowledge is kept, created, revised, organized, manipulated, bantered about, reformed, added to, constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed. Most students are not allowed to view how all this fits together and what role they themselves might play. Ultimately, the goal of infusing the undergraduate curriculum with research-based learning is to facilitate their ability to define the meaning of research for themselves. The NSSE report endorses the movement toward engaging students more fully in a variety of activities that help students understand scholarship—the creation of knowledge.

The goal should be to maintain and strengthen the *context* of learning while enhancing the *content* of a liberal education, with the focus on inquiry, research, and discovery as a frame of mind. The foundation on which this

rests is that of incorporating information literacy skills—the hallmarks of being able to do research. In fact, what is important is helping students know how to find information that “matters” and then helping them figure out *why* it matters.

This volume brings information literacy into the mainstream of higher education and suggests, through the expertise of both librarians and faculty, that doing so will help meet the challenges addressed here. The volume is intended to both clarify definitions of information literacy and offer opportunities for it to be integrated into curriculum. Most important, the voices one reads in this volume are in harmony when they imply that information literacy is more than “finding information”; it is actually “creating knowledge.”

If you incorporate information literacy into course content, you adopt different ways of teaching through establishment of a “guide on the side” perspective of the teaching-student relationship. The literature of good teaching by such authors as Parker Palmer and Ken Bain is provoking faculty to examine their pedagogical practice. Information literacy can be viewed as a call to another approach to content and teaching practice.

In the first chapter, Diane VanderPol, Jeanne M. Brown, and Patricia Iannuzzi summarize five key initiatives in higher education, analyzing their call for the reform of undergraduate education. They consider the connections between the initiatives and then suggest how libraries and librarians are “uniquely positioned” to contribute to this call for reform. VanderPol, Brown, and Iannuzzi also suggest that a new way to look at the library is to view it as a laboratory, a place where students learn the “craft of research.” Because libraries are no longer the only place to find information, they need to reframe themselves as workplaces for development of both technical and critical-thinking skills.

Tiffini A. Travis, in Chapter Two, extends the notion of the key role a library can play in the educational process and highlights the work of the California State University System and its work in adopting information literacy. She suggests that librarians, and faculty, need to capture a key role in the change process of curricular reform. Travis finds that librarians need to insert themselves into curriculum committees and other avenues of general education reform to advocate for integration of information literacy. What guides her thinking throughout this chapter is change agent theory. Travis brings to mind that academic librarians have often dedicated a large amount of time to cultivating relationships with individual faculty for course-specific assignments. However, few libraries have successfully made information literacy an outcome adopted by the whole institution. Highlights of this chapter include the impact of a reward system on motivation, librarian faculty status, top-down curriculum initiatives, and identification of the major stakeholders.

Obviously, learning can take place anytime and anywhere, and in our new, technologically enhanced world, students have access to information as never before. In Chapter Three, Loanne Snavelly suggests that education will prepare individuals for lifelong independent learning, leisure activities,

and self-fulfillment. Thus, she asserts, information literacy skills are crucial in preparing individuals for independent inquiry. In her chapter, she addresses all of the new classroom technologies that have changed, or can change, the way we teach and learn. She also agrees with the other authors in this volume regarding the significance of the library as an institution that needs to be relocated into the center of student activity.

In discussions of information literacy competencies, little consideration has been given to the cognitive development level of our college students. Considering studies by Perry and Kitchener and King, one finds it apparent that many of the competencies listed in the Association of College and research Libraries (ACRL) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education are not understandable by lower-level college students and that some may not be understandable by any college student. In Chapter Four, Rebecca Jackson maps the standards to the cognitive development positions and levels outlined by Perry and Kitchener and King. She suggests that by looking at development levels, information literacy instructors may have a better idea of which competencies it is best to teach given a particular class's student make-up.

Following Jackson's look at the cognitive development of students, William A. Orme, in Chapter Five, takes a close look at how we educate first-year students and builds on Jackson's assessment. He suggests that first-year students come to higher education expecting to change but not really understanding what changes to expect. The works of Benjamin Bloom and William Perry provide some insight into paths for the intellectual and ethical development of students' perceptions—paths that closely mirror the values and goals of information literacy instruction programs. This chapter discusses the work of Bloom and Perry. Orme invites faculty to consider how the concerns of the information literacy movement are aligned with the broader mission of higher education and how a focus on information literacy development promotes student engagement and learning. Orme offers practical advice concerning incorporation of information literacy themes into disciplinary teaching.

Stephanie Sterling Brasley considers meaningful collaboration between faculty and librarians to be the key to successful integration of information literacy skill building. In Chapter Six, Brasley supports the notion that these skills are the key to lifelong learning and need to be placed at the center of undergraduate educational reform. She also agrees with others that the role of the librarian needs to change and that the place of the library might be more appropriately transformed into a student "information commons." This chapter explores strategies, models, and best practices and focuses on successes in garnering faculty interest in adopting information literacy into departmental and university initiatives. Brasley outlines steps for a shared vision and a new way to collaborate.

Robert Kenedy and Vivienne Monty confirm the work of Brasley. In Chapter Seven, they illustrate the importance of collaboration by presenting the reader with a model that has evolved over many years, the Dynamic

Purposeful Learning model. They focus on the benefits of combining collaborative teaching and information literacy and describe how this kind of partnership leads to enhanced student learning. Kenedy and Monty outline various classroom methods and other techniques to be used when faculty and librarians work together, guiding student research projects.

In all of the preceding chapters, the authors have argued that there is a need to place information literacy, and all that it means, at the center of curricular reform. Additionally, they have presented evidence that in this new, technologically savvy world, “finding” information is not the goal; knowing what to do with it is the key to becoming an educated person. To this end, Bonnie Gratch-Lindauer has worked with a team of scholars around the country to include information literacy behaviors in standardized college student surveys such as NSSE. In Chapter Eight, Gratch-Lindauer finds that using data that could be collected from these standardized surveys can help faculty and others begin designing new educational frameworks leading to stronger student engagement in academic endeavors.

In light of all of the changes described in these chapters, one of the major issues this editor has noted is that not only does the place of the library need to be redesigned but librarians themselves need to reframe their role in the academy. Perhaps they were once viewed as keepers and loaners of information, but that is no longer what is needed. Today higher education looks to librarians for skills that far exceed bibliographic teaching skills. Additionally, faculty need to be brought up to speed. They often consider information literacy skills to only include how to use databases and microfiche, surf the Web, search the stacks, and so forth. Teaching and learning are changing, and both faculty and librarians need to work together for a shared vision of new educational practice.

For this editor, education is about discovery. All members of the community of higher education have various skills to bring to this world of discovery. There needs to be a shift away from learning “how to find” or “how to library” to learning how to be information literate—learning how to question, understanding how to evaluate, and determining the worth, credibility, and relevance of what is found. In other words, turning information into knowledge is where we are headed. All of the authors in this volume understand this premise, and they offer rich insights into how to move in this direction.

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