Incorporating Information Literacy into the Workforce

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Overview

• Defining Information Literacy
• Information Literacy Standards
• Including standards in career and technical education
• Examples of successful incorporation of information literacy training
What is “Information Literacy”? 

- 1974 - Term first appears in a report on behalf of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science: “People trained in the application of information resources to their work can be called information literates. They have learned techniques and skills for using the wide range of information tools as well as primary sources in molding information solutions to their problems.” (Zurkowski, 1974, p. 6)
Information Literacy defined

• 1989 - *Final Report from the ALA Presidential Committee on Information Literacy*:

“To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.”
What is NOT (necessarily) Information Literacy*

• Computer literacy
• Library skills
• Critical thinking skills
• Traditional literacy or “functional” literacy

*though these are all related concepts to information literacy!
Why is Information Literacy so important?

- It is critical to be information literate in an information-centered society.
- Gone is the notion that you learn everything you need to know in school in order to do your job. We are in a world of “lifelong learners.”
- Information literacy plays a main role in being a knowledgeable member of the community.
Why the push for Information Literacy?

• The “Net Generation” sees the Web as its library, with no reference librarians to guide them.

• Studies reflect vast concern with information seeking skills of students:
  – Prefer the Internet over print resources
  – Poor searching skills
  – Poor evaluating skills
  – Poor citation skills

(Badke, 2009; Julien & Barker, 2009, p. 13-14)
“Knowledge Work” in the Workforce (Goad, 2002)

- Intellectual Capital
- Knowledge Management
  - Today’s workplace is:
    - Knowledge driven
    - Technology impacted
    - Where “learning is lifelong”
    - Where “change is the only constant.”
- Learning Organizations
Information Literacy in the Workplace

• Other current events impacting work:
  – Technology
  – Global Competition
  – Lack of Skilled Workers
  – Empowerment
  – Information Overload

• The end product: the “New Knowledge Worker”
Information Literacy Standards

- American Association of School Librarians (AASL)
- Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL)
- Various national organizations and states have learning or outcome standards, most of which draw from the above.
Learners use skills, resources, & tools to:

1. Inquire, think critically, and gain knowledge.

2. Draw conclusions, make informed decisions, apply knowledge to new situations, and create new knowledge.

3. Share knowledge and participate ethically and productively as members of our democratic society.

4. Pursue personal and aesthetic growth.

(from AASL, “Standards for the 21st Century Learner”)

1. **Identify a need for information.**

- “The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed.”
2. Know how to **access** the information.

- “The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.”
3. Be able to **evaluate** the information found.

- “The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.”
4. Know how to **use** the information.

- “The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.”
5. Use the information ethically and honestly.

• “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.”

(from ACRL, “Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education”)
Goad’s Expanded Model: 16 Steps

1. Establish the need.
2. Break the subject down into its parts.
3. Identify the relationships and its hierarchies.
4. Identify information sources.
5. Identify multiple sources.
6. Select a strategy.
7. Develop a question list.
8. Conduct the search.
9. Authenticate the information.
10. Filter the information while remaining focused.
11. Analyze the information.
12. Summarize the information once gathered.
13. Select the information that applies.
14. Put information into context.
15. Apply the information.
16. Evaluate the action taken and reenter as necessary.

(Goad, 2002, p. 27)
Workplaces as Learning Environments (Billett, 2001)

How workplaces contribute to learning:

• Individual engagement in activity.

• Guidance from experienced co-workers, such as in team-based work activity, collaborative thinking, problem solving.

• Indirect guidance; observing, listening, engagement with objects or artifacts, etc.
Learning Everyday: Routine vs. Non-Routine Activity

Activities and Outcome
- Reinforces what we have already learnt through
- Recreates new knowledge through

Problem Solving
- Routine problem solving
- Non-routine problem solving

Analogous to
- Piaget’s assimilation Near transfer
- Piaget’s accommodation Far transfer
“Information Experiences of Ambulance Officers in Training and On-Road Practice” (Lloyd, 2009)

• Ambulance Education Centre - Rozelle, New South Wales, Australia.
• How is information used and/or experienced while training to become an ambulance officer (EMT/paramedic)?
• How is the information experience different for a novice, trainee and professional?
Novice Experience with Information

- Text
- Social
- Corporeal
- Education centre
Trainee Experience with Information (on-road context)
On-road Workplace Experience with Information

Social

Corporeal

Text
Three sources of information:

• Epistemic (codified, textual)
  – Formal classroom training
• Social (tacit)
  – Peer-to-peer, disseminated through the professional community
• Corporeal (from the body)
  – Hands-on experience
Findings

• Information literacy is too often defined strictly as a text-based “skill set.”

• Information literacy is also a “socio-cultural practice” that encompasses peer-to-peer sharing of information and practical experiences.
Practical Applications of Information Literacy
“Information Literacy in Vocational Education: A Course Model” (Xing, et al., 2009)

- Vocational education has evolved from its origins of manual/trade arts training; now encompasses foundational skills for “lifelong learning.”
- Katherine Gibbs School – Melville, NY
- Private, for-profit vocational institute.
- Offers associate degree and certificate programs in business, medical and legal office administration, criminal justice, graphic design, etc.
Information Literacy Course

• Full 3-credit course offered as a cross-discipline fundamental.

• Course designed to stimulate “student active learning,” with lectures, tests, demonstrations and hands-on exercises incorporated.

• Course developed for an 11-week term, with final project consisting of an annotated bibliography and a presentation about what resources they found and how they found them.
“Information Literacy in Continuing Professional Development of Medical Practitioners” (Petrak, et al, 2007)

• University of Zagreb Medical School – Continuing Education Programme

• Medical practitioners required to participate in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) during six year periods between licensure.

• Central Medical Library started an applied program on search and evaluation of medical information for doctors, nurses and other medical staff.
CML/UZMS Course: Finding and Appraisal of Medical Information

• Concentrated on resources that were open access and free.

• Course consisted of:
  1. Major traits of medical resources on the Internet
  2. Creating useful search strategies
  3. Searching Web resources (with 5 hands-on exercises)
Questions to take with you…

• Is the concept of “information literacy” being addressed at your institution?

• Do you feel students come to campus “information literate” or just “Internet literate”?

• In what ways could you incorporate or integrate information literacy in career or workforce training?
References


• Goad, Tom W. *Information Literacy and Workplace Performance.* Westport, CT: Quorum, 2002.
References


Slides and handout available at http://guides.library.msstate.edu/magnolia