


# Assessing Trinity's First Year Information Literacy Goals



Teresa Y. Neely, Ph.D.  
University of New Mexico  
neely@unm.edu

Tuesday, May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
Holt Center, Trinity University

# Why I'm Here . . .

---

- Information Literacy Assessment
- Integrating First Year Information Literacy Goals
- Developing and Assessing Assignment Outcomes

# Pre-Information Literacy/Outcomes Assessment Course Lifecycle

---

- Develop or inherit course to teach
- Develop or alter or adopt a syllabus
- Develop or alter or adopt grading scale for course (Assessment)
  - Assign points to major course elements
    - Class participation and Attendance
    - Homework and Assignments
    - Quizzes and Tests
    - Final Project
- Teach course
- Assign Grades

# Changing Expectations and Accountability = Data/Evidence

---

- Greater emphasis on assessing student learning outcomes at all levels
  - Institution, College , Department, Program, Individual
  
- Greater Accountability from Internal and External Forces
  - Accreditation
  - QEP
  - Mandates

# Trinity University – Expanding Horizons - Outcomes

---

- 5 year plan - Academic curriculum integrated with information literacy

## The Plan

- Ensure students better prepared to work conscientiously and ethically with information in coursework
- Provides opportunities for students to apply critical thinking/research skills to co-curricular lives

# Trinity University – Expanding Horizons - Outcomes

---

## The Plan

- More thoughtful, more informed, more energized campus culture
- Graduates well prepared for life beyond Trinity
  - Lifelong Learning

# Trinity University's First Year Information Literacy Goals

---

## □ First-Year Experience – Basic Goals

- UNDERSTAND – the varieties of information sources available
- ACCESS – information efficiently and effectively
- USE ETHICALLY – understand the concept of intellectual property and the economic, legal, and social contexts of information and use information ETHICALLY

# Assessing Student Learning @ Course Level

---

- Course lectures
- Course participation
  - In class
  - Virtually (course blogs, chats, email lists, etc.)
- Course quizzes and examinations
- **Assignments**
  - Work produced in class
  - Work produced outside of class

# Course Level Assessment – The Holistic Approach

---

- Course Syllabus
  - Represents the Course Professor
  
- Course Goals and Objectives
  
- Course Assignments
  - Assignment Goals and Objectives

---

# **COURSE SYLLABUS**

# Course Syllabus

---

- ❑ Describes course content and expectations for course completion including policies and rules
- ❑ Heart of the course
  - Course Description
  - **Goals and Objectives**
  - Grading
  - Honor Code
  - Attendance Policies, Dress Codes, etc.
  - University rules/guidelines/requirements
  - Important dates (drop/add)
  - **Course Schedule – tells class-to-class activities**
  - **Assignments**

# Course Syllabus

---

- ❑ Is not just for you and **your** students
  - Living and breathing document consulted, if available, by people who support student success in your course
    - ❑ Librarians
    - ❑ Writing Center
    - ❑ Tutoring Center
  
- ❑ Should **not** stress out the student, library staff, friends, partners, classmates, or family

# Course Syllabus

---

- Should model information literacy behavior—extension of course professor
  - Complete bibliographic citations for course text and readings
  - Posted and readily accessible to all
- Should **not** include recommended texts and readings that the library doesn't own or that you did not put on reserve
  - Hunting for course reading materials should not be an assignment unless you mean them to be

# Course Syllabus

---

- ❑ Should not attempt to suppress/legislate the behavior and lifestyle of today's students
  - Multiple generations in the classroom – teaching and learning (see Zemke, Raines & Filipczak, 2000)
  
- ❑ Studying Students: The Undergraduate Research Project at the University of Rochester (Foster and Gibbons, 2007)

# Course Syllabus

---

- Should not discourage “disruptive technologies”
  - Should encourage and incorporate technology and cultural norms
  - Laptops, multifunction cell phones, and ipods do not have to be disruptive technologies
    - Cell phone policy vs. Noise policy
  
- ACRL Standards does not address technology
  - Holding virtual office hours
  - Adding your CHAT handle to your syllabus
  - Creating blogs, wikis, or social networking pages for your classes

# Course Syllabus

---

- Explain or spell out jargon and terminology
  - Primary Sources – definition differs for different disciplines
  - Thesis
  - Analysis
  - Proposal
  - Journal/Scholarly/Peer Reviewed

# Course Syllabus

---

- Rethink
  - Lists of journal titles
  - Using the word “hard copy”
  - Prohibiting websites as a resource
  
- Use examples in assignments students can relate to – engaging, current, interesting

---

# GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

# Course Goals/Objectives

---

- ❑ Spell out what you expect to convey to students during the course
- ❑ Describe what learning will take place
- ❑ Describe what skills will be acquired
- ❑ Assumes a variety of methods for course content delivery
- ❑ Assumes a variety of methods for course assessment
- ❑ **MUST BE MEASURABLE**

# Writing Learning Objectives – Start with the End

---

- ❑ “Clear description of the outcome or behavior you want students to be able to exhibit, as the result of instruction or an activity. It should be specific, concise, observable, and measurable.”
- ❑ A good objective clearly communicates your intent and leaves little room for interpretation.

(Winegarden, USCD)

# Writing Learning Objectives – Start with the End

---

- ❑ **Performance** – An objective always states what a student is expected to be able to DO
- ❑ **Conditions** – An objective often describes the conditions under which a student is able to DO or perform the task
- ❑ **Criterion** – If possible, an objective clarifies *how well* the student must perform the task, in order for the performance to be acceptable

(Winegarden, USCD)

---

# ASSIGNMENTS

# Assignments

---

- Should have measurable goals and objectives
  - Help to achieve course objectives
- Reinforce course content outside of course where most learning takes place
- Provides practical experiences with the newly introduced information and knowledge
- Can serve as assessment tool for demonstrated experience and knowledge acquisition

# Assignment Development – Motivating Students

---

- Curiosity about subject matter
  - a need to know
- Relevance of the assignment to the course content and other assignments
- Perceived value in knowing the material
- Lively modeling of the process by the professor or librarian
- An expected level of success with the assignment

(Parker-Gibson, 2001)

# Assignment Development

---

- Provide assignment objectives
  - Tell students why they're doing the assignment and its purpose
- Clarify the assignment requirements and expectations
  - State the requirements in writing and verbally
- Describe the specifics of the assignment
  - Is there a particular citation style you require?
  - Are there specific types of resources you prefer/require?
  - Provide examples in writing if possible

# Assignment Development

---

- Distinguish between resources
  - Popular and scholarly
  - Primary and secondary
  - Show examples if possible
- Check for feasibility
  - Make sure the library has the resources to support your assignment
  - Make sure students are aware of ILL and document delivery options

# Assignment Development

---

- Check the assignment beforehand
  - Take the assignment yourself
  - From the student's perspective if possible
- Do not assume students already know the basics
  - Most undergraduates learn to use the library in high school and by self teaching
    - (Damko, 1990, Simon, 1995; Alire, 1984)
  - Assume minimal knowledge of library resources, procedures, and jargon.

# Assignment Development

---

- Allow variety in topic selection
  - Assigning the same topic to all contributes to mutilation or disappearance of resources
- Foster critical thinking
  - Encourage critical approach to conducting research
  - Encourage students to use a variety of sources and to evaluate those sources

# Assignment Development

---


- Allow for incremental improvement
  - Chunk up large assignments and allow students to work on small assignments throughout the semester/term
  - Give written feedback on each small assignment
- Keep your assignments current
  - Make sure your assignments reflect the latest resources held by the library

# Assignment Development

---

- Get to know your reference, instruction, and information literacy librarians
  - Most academic libraries assign a subject liaison for each discipline or major supported at your institution
  - Schedule some time with your subject liaison
  - Refer your students to their subject liaison
  - List your reference librarian's name and contact information on your syllabus/assignment

(See Neely, 2006; Davis, 2003)



When Syllabus, Goals and  
Objectives, and Assignments all  
Come Together, It Is  
Magical...HOWEVER....

# The Information Literacy Learning Environment



# Library anxiety is real

---

- **Library anxiety** – information anxiety – information overload is real
  - Does not understand available information;
  - Feels overwhelmed by the amount of information to be understood;
  - Does not know if certain information exists;
  - Does not know where to find information;
  - Knows where to find information, but does not have the key to access it

(Wurman, 1989)

# Library anxiety defined:

---

- “In lay terms, library anxiety is a psychological/physiological disorder associated with actually entering a library building and having to deal with or understand library terminology, e.g., Dewey Decimal system, LC, call numbers, Boolean searching, etc. Although long observed, this phenomenon has only been recently scientifically studied.”

(Brown, 2009)

- 
- ❑ Library anxiety was prevalent among most college students
  - ❑ Library anxiety hampered critical thinking skills
  - ❑ Critical thinking develops with the use of college libraries

(Kwon, 2008)

- 
- Kwon's research confirmed "Mellon's two-decade-old study finding that most college freshmen suffered from library anxiety still is a hindrance for many Millennials, the new generation that was born in 1982 or after and known to be technologically savvy and proficient, to perform their library task"

(Kwon, 2008; Mellon, 1986)

# Assignment Examples

---

## □ Access:

- Topic development
- Keywords vs. Controlled Vocabulary
- Formulate research questions based on topic
  - Define keywords, concepts, synonyms
- Concept map
  - Determine central word or concept or research ?
  - Build map by adding associated concepts, items, descriptive words and questions
- Given research topics/situations – determine best database to answer set of questions

# Assignment Examples

---

## □ Understand –

- Scholarly publishing cycle
  - Investigate production and dissemination of information in a given discipline
- Implement informal search of literature via investigating materials in local library
  - Browse call number ranges
  - Compare secondary and tertiary sources
- Search articles in two related, but discipline specific indexes and compare findings
  - Example: Sociological Abstracts and PsycINFO

# Assignment Examples

---

## □ Ethical Use

- Research and evaluate material for use in website, brochure, publication or for use in radio/television spot
- Use of music/video clips in coursework product
- Focus on plagiarism and academic integrity
  - Maureen Dowd – *New York Times* columnist
- Use Case Study to engage students in ethics discussions

Questions?



# References

---

- ❑ Alire, Camila A. 1984. A nationwide survey of education doctoral students' attitudes regarding the importance of the library and the need for bibliographic instruction. Ph.D. diss., University of Northern Colorado.
- ❑ Brown, B. Susan. "The Anxious Patron." *Library Journal* 129, no. 13 (August 15, 2004): 124-124. *Academic Search Complete*, EBSCOhost (accessed May 19, 2009).
- ❑ Damko, Ellen E. 1990. Student attitudes toward bibliographic instruction. Master's research paper, Kent State University, ERIC, ED 367373.
- ❑ Davis, Philip M. 2003. Effect of the Web on undergraduate citation behavior: Guiding student scholarship in a networked age." *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 3(1): 41-51.

# References

---

- ❑ Foster Fried, Nancy and Susan Gibbons. 2007. *Studying students: The undergraduate research project at Rochester University*. Chicago, ACRL, American Library Association.
- ❑ Kwon, Nahyun. 2008. A mixed-methods investigation of the relationship between critical thinking and library anxiety among undergraduates students in their information search process. *College and Research Libraries* (March 2008): 117-131.
- ❑ Mellon, Constance A. 1986. Library anxiety: A grounded theory and its development. *College and Research Libraries* 47:160-65.
- ❑ Neely, Teresa Y. 2000. Aspects of information literacy: A sociological and psychological study. Ph.D. diss., University of Pittsburgh.

# References

---

- ❑ Neely, Teresa Y. 2006. *Information Literacy Assessment: Standards-Based Tools and Assignments*. Chicago, American Library Association.
- ❑ Parker-Gibson, Necia. 2001. Library assignments: Challenges that students face and how to help. *College Teaching* 49 (2): 65.
- ❑ Simon, Charlotte E. 1995. Information retrieval techniques: The differences in cognitive strategies and search behaviors among graduate students in an academic library. Ph.D. diss., Wayne State University, ERIC, ED 390394.
- ❑ Winegarden, Babbi. Material adapted from materials developed by Dr. Winegarden, UCSD School of Medicine.
- ❑ Wurman, Robert S. 1989. *Information Anxiety*. New York: Doubleday.

# References

---

- Zemke, Ron, Claire Raines, Bob Filipczak. 2000. *Generations at Work: Managing the Clash of Veterans, Boomers, Xers, and Nexters in Your Workplace*. New York, American Management Association.