

2004-2005 Sabbatical Proposal

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Integrating Information Literacy into the College Curriculum

A. Project Description

A.1. Abstract: This project will examine successful information literacy programs at colleges and universities in the United States and abroad. 'Successful' in this case means programs that have effectively integrated information literacy throughout their college curriculum:

- The library reaches out to and collaborates with faculty to develop the information literacy skills of their students.
- Students are asked consistently by instructors to find and use information appropriate to the content of their courses.

Information Literacy is essential for our students: They must be able to identify and describe an information need, negotiate the complex array of available information options, select appropriate sources, and then use information to solve identified needs and problems. Librarians and other faculty must work together to create better strategies to help students find and use information effectively, and ethically. To address this challenge, I propose to investigate the following research questions:

1. How are these effective programs structured to engage college faculty?
2. What are the most effective models for faculty-library collaboration?
3. How do these programs measure their success?

The final report will include recommendations for the information literacy program at Seattle Central, and I will share what I learn with the other librarians in the District.

A.2. Objectives:

1. Identify institutions with effective programs through literature review, conferences, and contacts in the Information Literacy movement
2. Visit identified colleges & universities at home and abroad
3. Interview librarians and other faculty to investigate successful library-faculty collaborations
4. Develop profiles of effective programs (using data from accreditation self-studies, interviews, and college and library websites)
5. Collect assessment tools and strategies for measuring information literacy and program effectiveness
6. Collect ideas for library-community outreach programs
7. Compare effective programs with each other, and with ours
8. Attend Information Literacy Conferences
9. Present findings and recommendations to Seattle Community Colleges

Plan	Timeline
Literature Review	Interim: March 2005, Final: Fall 2005
Identify institutions for study	Present and ongoing until January 2005
Develop and test profile and survey	Present and ongoing until January 2005
Attend conferences	Present and ongoing
Visit colleges and universities in the U.S.	Begin January 2005
Prepare interim report	March 2005
Visit institutions abroad	Begin March 2005
Prepare final report	Summer and Fall 2005

A.3. How I will demonstrate I have achieved my objectives:

Objective	Benchmark
1. Identify effective programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literature review Research database records for programs
2. Visit colleges & universities at home and abroad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research journal for personal record Research database records for notes
3. Interview librarians and other faculty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research database records of interviews Interim report will record progress
4. Develop profiles of effective programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research database records of profiles Interim report will record progress
5. Collect assessment tools and strategies for measuring information literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collection and Research database descriptions of assessment methods Summary description (in reports)
6. Collect ideas for library-community information literacy outreach programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collection and research database descriptions of outreach programs Interim and final reports
7. Compare effective programs with each other, and with ours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interim and final reports
8. Attend Information Literacy Conferences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Research journal notes for reports Program notes from conferences
9. Present findings and recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final report Presentation for District librarians

A.4. Additional Financial Support I will seek: I will apply for the following grants to help defray the costs of registration for and travel to conferences:

- Washington State Library Professional Development Grant
- Seattle Community Colleges Faculty Development Grant
- SCCD International Programs Faculty Development Grant

B.1. Benefit to Students, Instructional Program, College and Community

This is an age where an overwhelming amount of information is available, and where retrieving information requires many different skills, including computer literacy, communicating ideas and information, and critical thinking. These abilities are core outcomes for both the current accreditation process and for the new AA degree currently under development (see attachments A, B, and C).

While Seattle Community College librarians and faculty are already working together to develop students' information literacy, we know that some students are developing these skills, while others are not. Our credit classes provide comprehensive information literacy instruction for the students who enroll in them (maybe as many as 250 students per year across the three campuses, a small fraction of those we serve). Many other students benefit from the library workshops we develop for specific assignments. While some instructors do a good job of integrating information skills into their assignments and learning outcomes, this is not consistent across the curriculum and many students never receive even basic training. We could do better; I would like to find out how.

My project will focus on how libraries with successful programs are engaging faculty outside of the library in the work of promoting information and research skills. I will examine these programs and collect strategies to increase faculty participation in developing the information literacy of their students. I will be looking at institutions with college-wide learning outcomes that explicitly include information literacy, and evaluate how the library and other faculty ensure that all students have access to information literacy instruction.

Information overload is a problem as well for the wider community, which could benefit from a strong link between our information literacy program and others in the community, such as links to public libraries and schools. Community colleges provide opportunities for motivated people to change their lives. They are in a unique position in to help people return to school, be retrained, or move into a university track. Our library currently provides a bridge for local high school students who are potential college students: We use the library as a point of contact for these students to explore future admission. The Montlake Bridge Project is a support system for our students who are transferring to the University of Washington, and again we use the libraries as connection between the two institutions. I would like to investigate what kinds of community outreach other college libraries may include as part of their instruction programs.

In summary, my strategies to improve student learning for information literacy are: investigating effective programs; evaluating faculty – library collaboration models; and collecting ideas for assessment and community outreach. I believe that my sabbatical project will benefit the college and community because I will return with fresh ideas and concrete proposals that will help us improve our own information literacy program.

B.2. How the Sabbatical will benefit my professional and personal development:

My special area of expertise is information literacy curriculum design and development. Since the spring of 2001 I have chaired the Seattle Central Information Literacy Committee, a group that promotes the development of information literacy through library services and instruction across the college curriculum. I am eager to learn how other colleges are doing this.

This Fall I have taken a graduate-level research methods course at the University of Washington Information School to develop my ideas for this project, and to identify appropriate research methods. I learned about research software programs that I could use to keep records of my findings. I intend to use *Ethnograph* - or a similar program - to develop my interim and final reports. I expect that the data I collect will provide material for future articles and reports of interest and benefit to my colleagues. As a personal and professional development strategy, I also intend to keep a journal that will record reflections on what I am seeing, and ideas I gain from visits and reading. While the journal itself will remain private, reflections and insights will be included in my interim and final reports.

In addition to visiting American colleges and universities, I hope to travel to Great Britain, Germany, and Sweden to visit peer institutions with successful information literacy programs. I have already begun to identify institutions through international information literacy conferences and forums. I have also observed a substantial body of information literacy work in Australia. While I do not plan to visit Australia at this time, I do hope to include at least one interview with a contact through the Information School at the University of Washington. To see these programs in action - at home and abroad - I need to travel during the school year. In the mean time, I am brushing up my German and learning Swedish.

Finally, I would benefit from time away from my regular teaching, reference, and other responsibilities to catch up on the literature of information literacy, and to make new contacts among the people who are leaders in this area. I am also eager to attend conferences which highlight effective programs and strategies, and which will provide new ideas for program development and assessment. Thank you for considering this proposal.

C. This is my first application for professional leave. I have been employed by the Seattle Community College Libraries since January 1988. I was granted tenure in April 1996.