

Integrating Information Literacy in the Health Sciences Curriculum

A Successful Library/Faculty Collaboration

Dianna E. Sachs, Instructional Services Librarian
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan, U.S.A.



Main points of presentation

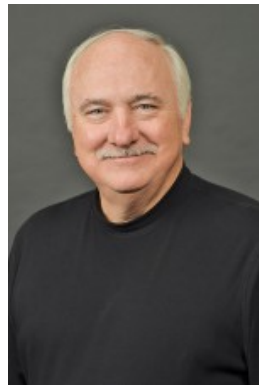
- ◆ Origins of collaborative program
- ◆ Evolution of program goals
- ◆ Overview of current program
- ◆ Ongoing assessment of program
- ◆ Challenges and triumphs



Western Michigan University

- ◆ Approximately 24,000 students
 - ◆ 19,000 undergraduate students
 - ◆ 5,000 Masters and PhD students
- ◆ College of Health and Human Services
 - ◆ Nursing, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Social Work, Speech Pathology, Interdisciplinary Health Services, Blindness and Low Vision
 - ◆ Combined undergraduate/graduate professional programs

Collaboration at Work



Origins of Program

- ◆ Health sciences librarian connected with College
- ◆ Faculty concerns:
 - ◆ Students do not follow proper citation and formatting guidelines (APA Style)
 - ◆ Students inadvertently plagiarize
- ◆ How can library help? Information Literacy!

Developing Goals

- ◆ Identify the scope and type of information needed for a given research scenario
- ◆ Locate information from a variety of sources and formats
- ◆ Evaluate appropriateness of information
- ◆ Avoid plagiarism
- ◆ Cite and format papers according to APA format

Program Overview

- ◆ “Placement Exam” – pre-assessment
 - ◆ Mid-point of undergraduate studies, or beginning of graduate studies
 - ◆ Required for entrance into upper-level research/writing course
 - ◆ “Open book” exam
- ◆ Course – for students who do not pass placement exam
 - ◆ Online course
 - ◆ One credit-hour (typical course at WMU is 3 credit-hours)
 - ◆ Taught by librarians

Course Topics

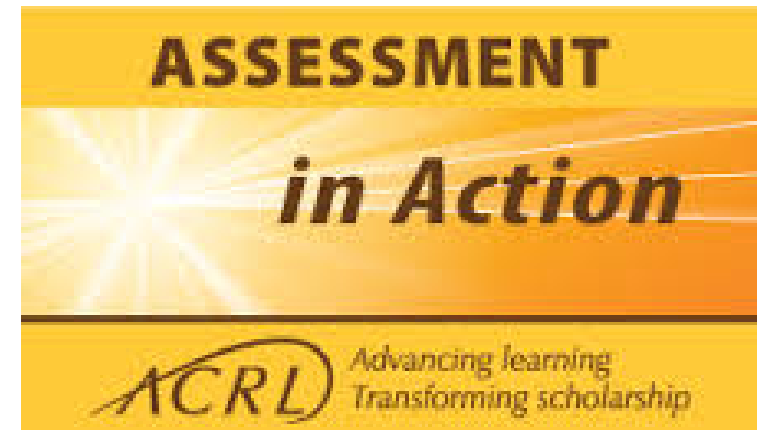
- ◆ Information cycle
- ◆ How health science professionals use information
- ◆ Developing and refining a research question
- ◆ Information formats and sources
- ◆ How to read and understand scientific journal articles
- ◆ Evaluating information
- ◆ Data visualization
- ◆ Ethical use of information in health care
- ◆ Citations and formatting – how and why it matters
- ◆ Avoiding plagiarism

Initial Program Assessment

- ◆ Pilot program assessment
 - ◆ Did students demonstrate improved information literacy at end of course?
 - ◆ How did students perceive usefulness and applicability of the course?
- ◆ Measures:
 - ◆ Grades
 - ◆ Student feedback
- ◆ Lesson learned: assessment of pilot program is essential!

Ongoing Program Assessment

- ◆ Current assessment initiatives
 - ◆ Long-term impact of program on student learning
 - ◆ Assessment team participating in ACRL “Assessment in Action: Academic Libraries and Student Success”
- ◆ Measures:
 - ◆ Assessment of students’ IL demonstrated in upper-level research papers
 - ◆ Student feedback – did program prepare you for upper-level work?
 - ◆ Faculty interviews – are students prepared for upper-level work?



Challenges and Triumphs

- ◆ Logistical hurdles:
 - ◆ Scalability – not enough librarians!
 - ◆ Finances
 - ◆ Online learning
- ◆ Juggling priorities and goals:
 - ◆ Library
 - ◆ College faculty
 - ◆ Students
 - ◆ University administrators



Questions?

Dianna E. Sachs, Instructional Services Librarian
Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan, U.S.A.
dianna.sachs@wmich.edu

