

Proven Strategies for Building an Information Literacy Program. Edited by Susan Carol Curzon and Lynn D. Lampert. New York, NY: Neal-Schuman Publishers, 2007. 350 pp. 75.00 USD. ISBN-10: 1-55570-608-8; ISBN-13: 978-1-55570-608-1. ∞

Unlike many books in this subject area, **Proven Strategies for Building an Information Literacy Program** is not the work of one or two collaborating authors. Rather, it is a well-organized and cohesive exploration of information literacy with contributions from twenty practitioners who have broken down many of the common roadblocks facing instruction librarians today. We should heed their words and build on their experience. We have heard and read much about the need for faculty/librarian collaboration in an academic setting; however, this work takes the discussion beyond that relationship, stressing the valuable role that school and public librarians can play in information literacy. For this reason, the volume should be read by librarians working in public, school and university settings.

The editors, Susan Carol Curzon and Lynn D. Lampert, have developed an “information literacy wheel” with eighteen sections corresponding to the eighteen chapters of the book; included are such topics as “goals,” “planning,” “timing,” “curriculum,” “teaching” and “assessment.” The preface provides an explanation of the wheel and recommendations on how to use the book. Each chapter begins with a brief introduction which places the content in context and introduces the author. Chapters conclude with a list of recommended readings, though a more general reading list is located at the end of the volume.

Creation of an information literacy program that addresses the needs of clients while integrating with the institutional setting is a major challenge for instruction librarians. Increasingly, alliances with student services/student success initiatives or affiliations with writing centres and academic departments are established. While these alliances can be effective, they often stem from a lack of our own resources and are not lasting because they focus on one component rather than the whole program. This book promotes the careful, step-by-step development of a sustainable program.

A successful, sustainable program must encompass a broad range of strategies that involve the various factions present in academia: faculty, librarians and administrators. To facilitate “buy-in” and ensure sustainability, it is essential to integrate the information literacy program into the very fabric of the institution: into the mission, vision and values of the organization as a whole. The culture of the organization can be a make-or-break factor. Judith Peacock illustrates her discussion of strategic planning with the Information Literacy Framework developed at Queensland University of Technology and its three components (extra, inter and intra-curricular). Her insightful analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the program is instructive.

Scott Walter explains that the organization, or “campus” is really a melding of separate cultures: those of individual disciplines, departments, professional communities and perhaps the library itself. He begins his essay with the question “Why do some libraries seem to have such success in developing powerful partnerships with classroom faculty in support of information literacy instruction, while others struggle so mightily to little effect?” (p. 55). The resulting essay formulates underlying reasons and offers useful strategies to overcome obstacles. Like Peacock, Walter draws upon personal experience to frame his essay, in this case the integration of an Information Literacy component into the curriculum at the College of Education at Washington State University. Walter’s contribution will assist readers in recognizing viable alliances within their organization, and formulating an approach to encourage buy-in from less receptive colleagues.

Other chapters discuss teaching models, the importance of creating a cohesive instruction team and the need to engage students in original research. Promotion and marketing are vital to the success of any instruction program, and a section of the information literacy wheel is devoted to the topic of social marketing, which is described as the most effective way to promote information literacy. Bonnie Gratch-Lindauer’s thoughtful essay on evaluation and assessment, and the process of revision and refinement, addresses how we determine the effect of our efforts on information literacy.

The focus of much research and writing on Information Literacy is the academic milieu and how to reach university/college students. But what of the students who do not complete high school, or do not enter post-secondary education? School librarians, then, play an essential role in creating information literate citizens, as well as setting the groundwork for those who pursue further education. “The School Library Media Teacher as Information Literacy Partner” is an enlightening essay that explains the role of specialized media teachers and their modes of interactivity with K-12 classroom teachers. Their expertise in helping design interactive, inter-subject assignments that develop information literacy skills is illustrated with examples from various grades and subject areas. One can see the relevance of collaboration among these K-12 professionals and how they can enrich the efforts of their academic colleagues.

The most popular methods of delivering information literacy instruction in public libraries involve computer classes, individual instruction during the reference interview and “homework assistance” programs for students. Though often not referred to as “information literacy”, the skills and techniques conveyed to public library patrons include how to use print and online resources, how to do research and how to critically evaluate information. Such instruction is complementary to school and academic programs, and partnerships will strengthen instruction programs.

The twenty authors involved in this work have offered personal examples, case studies and practical advice. Their experience is invaluable to anyone planning on setting up an information literacy program. **Proven Strategies for Building an Information Literacy Program** will be a valued and oft-consulted reference volume worthy of a place on any instruction librarian's desk.

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