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Lessons Learned About Developing and Coordinating an Instruction Program with Freshman Composition

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Abstract

In the Spring of 2001, the Oregon State University Libraries began planning for a collaboration with the university's Freshman Composition Program. In implementing this project, with no additional library resources, and with the majority of library faculty less experienced in working with freshman students, the coordinators of the program learned numerous lessons which highlighted both the steps needed in initiating and maintaining a new instruction program and the functions and competencies vital to providing instructional leadership and coordination in an academic library. The following case study describes the process that the coordinators of this instruction program followed and will discuss the important role that library instruction coordinators have to play in starting a new program of library instruction.

"Getting Up to Speed, or Lessons Learned about Developing and Coordinating an Instruction Program from our Collaboration with Freshman Composition : A Case-Based Study."

Just how does a large academic institution go about starting a new program of formal library instruction? And what is the role of the person(s) charged with implementing such a program? Little literature appears to exist offering guidance to those given such a charge. Case studies on initiating instruction programs focus mainly on librarian faculty development – how they learn new skills in technology and teaching. Guidelines for instruction programs in academic libraries describe general competencies for personnel, but do not go specifically into the coordinator's role. Guidelines and best practices documents also define the institution's supporting role for library instruction programs. Literature on the staffing of library instruction programs specify the need for an individual or team of persons to coordinate and evaluate the program, but don't detail the necessary competencies required for those overseeing these programs.

In the Spring of 2001, the Oregon State University Libraries (OSU) began planning for a collaboration with the university's Freshman Composition Program (FCP), the result of which would be 2 sessions of class instruction provided by instruction librarians on research/information literacy skills for each section of the FCP class – about 30 sections per term for a total of 60 additional instruction hours for library faculty. In implementing this project, with no additional library resources, and with the majority of library faculty less experienced in working with freshman students, the coordinators of the program learned numerous lessons which highlighted both the steps needed in initiating and maintaining a new instruction program and the functions and competencies vital to providing instructional leadership and coordination in an academic library. The

following description of our work for this collaboration describes the process that the coordinators of this instruction program followed and will discuss the important role that library instruction coordinators have to play in starting a new program of library instruction.

Library Instruction Coordinators in the Literature?

Donna McCool noted over 10 years ago that new or expanding library instruction programs must assess and develop the instructional skills of existing library staff, and that:

> In organizations without widespread experience, the recruitment of an experienced individual to administer the program will help to establish a sense of direction. This administrator should be knowledgeable about teaching methodologies; possess personnel management, budget, and planning skills; be knowledgeable about measurement and evaluation of library services and programs; be able to recognize and target user groups and meet their needs. (McCool, 1989)

A review of the literature published since this article reveals that very little has been added to McCool's description of the coordinator's role, especially with regard to starting and managing new programs of library instruction. The bibliography of publications on user instruction published annually in <u>Reference Services Review</u> was examined from 1990-2001 with an eye to selecting those articles providing case studies of new programs of instruction, guidelines for instruction programs, and articles on faculty adoption of new skills. The operating premise was that the role of an instruction coordinator might reasonably be mentioned and/or described in relation to such topics.

Many articles and case studies within the last decade focused on the fact that proficiencies for instruction librarians were neither well articulated by nor provided for in

the schools which ostensibly prepare librarians for their jobs. Wittkopf (1990) noted that there is a "disparate array of proficiencies for BI librarians," defined by library schools, hiring libraries, and practitioners. Shonrock and Mulder's (1993) reporting of a study conducted by the ACRL Bibliographic Instruction Section identified twenty-five primary proficiencies for instruction librarians, and noted that of these twenty-five, only two of the proficiencies were identified as having been primarily learned in library school. Every one of the case studies that discussed faculty development prefaced their content with an emphasis on the need for librarians to develop their teaching skills, since these proficiencies were not a component of the curriculum of most library schools. Finally, we must note that none of the articles reviewed mentioned how or where coordinators of instruction programs were expected to learn the skills necessary to do their job.

   With this documented lack of preparation for instruction librarians in library school, there is need for institutions to develop the skills of their own staff. Petrowski and Wilson (1992) suggest that in-house training can be "an appropriate and effective antidote for the pervasive lack of BI preparation" and follow this statement with suggested resources for such in-house training. LaGuardia, et al. (1993) reported on the use of team-teaching as a way for faculty to improve their instructional skills. Levene and Frank (1993) discussed the use of peer coaching as a means for improvement. Leadley (1998) reported on the utilization of "teaching meetings" as a way for instruction librarians to "foster communication and collaboration …" and as a vehicle for "librarians new to teaching to develop as teachers." Again, none of these articles mentioned the role of an instruction coordinator in implementing or facilitating librarian faculty development at the respective institutions.

 Although the most recent ACRL <u>Guidelines for Instruction Programs in Academic Libraries</u> (1997) offer a framework intended to "best assist academic and research librarians in the preparation and development of effective instructional programs... "

there is no discussion of a program coordinator role or the qualifications needed. In the "Human Resources" section, they do identify functions that would seem to logically be the purview of a coordinator as opposed to an individual instruction librarian, specifically:

- Design a variety of instruction programs and services

- Promote, market, manage, and coordinate diverse instruction activities

- Collect and interpret assessment data to evaluate and update instruction programs and services

Likewise, the ACRL Best Practices Initiative (BPI) working document [1], which is designed to "provide those interested in information literacy programming with a set of characteristics against which to evaluate their program," speaks only in general terms about the role of a coordinator. Under "Category 4: Administrative & Institutional Support" it does suggest that "Administrators should…give clear identification of resources and responsibility to a person or team of persons for an information literacy program." And in "Category 8: Staff" it recommends that "Staff…should…have expertise to develop, coordinate, maintain, and evaluate information literacy programs."

In summary then, our review of the instruction literature for the last ten years reveals a general lack of information about how to implement a new instruction program or about the role and competencies of the person who would coordinate such a program. We will address this information gap in the description of our instructional collaboration with the Freshman Composition Program.

Background

The Reference & Instruction (R & I) Department of the OSU Libraries has, for several years, functioned with a workgroup management structure. Various aspects of managing and coordinating reference desk operations, publications, and instruction are handled by groups of librarians, as opposed to being administered by individuals. The Instruction

Workgroup is composed of those members of the R & I Department who expressed interest (with the agreement of the department head), with one person serving as coordinator. In 2000, the Instruction Workgroup was charged with planning, coordinating, and evaluating the instruction program of the OSU Libraries. All faculty members of the R & I Department provided instruction, mostly to upper division undergraduate and graduate classes in their respective subject liaison areas. Although some instruction for lower division classes has existed, including at least one credit class in English, much of our interaction was at the reference desk or comprised of providing tours to freshman orientation programs. The workgroup and department were united in their desire to get out of the "tour business" and to implement a more formalized program of information literacy instruction in the university.

Mission Statement

The Libraries' Instruction Workgroup based much of its early work in developing a more formalized instruction program at OSU on the guidelines provided by the BPI working document. We initially drafted a mission statement, a program overview, and a set of goals and working objectives for the instruction program and the Instruction Workgroup. In the process, the Instruction Workgroup also outlined a set of functions that would ideally be performed by an Instruction Coordinator and this was included as a recommendation at the end of the document. The mission statement sought, as recommended by the BPI, to align itself with both our own institution's mission and the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (ILCS) [2]. With no formal instructional program in place at the time, the goals and objectives focused on the activities needed to begin putting a program in place rather than on the goals and objectives of a fully functioning program (Category 2, BPI). The draft was reviewed and approved by the entire R & I Department faculty.

Assessment

To determine what kinds of instruction were taking place at the OSU Libraries, the Instruction Workgroup surveyed library instruction faculty, framing its assessment in terms of the information literacy competencies outlined in the recently published ILCS. We reviewed the standards, indicators and outcomes, and selected those we thought applicable to introductory and/or undergraduate instruction. We created a form that asked about whether the indicators and outcomes were addressed in the librarian's instruction of lower division undergraduates, upper division undergraduates or graduate students. We also asked faculty to indicate the forum in which these competencies were addressed, such as one-shot sessions, credit classes, or work at the reference desk. All teaching librarians were asked to complete a survey form for each subject area in which they taught, since we suspected there might be different approaches across disciplines. A more complete description of this 'self-study' process is presented in Davidson et al. (2002).

Identification of Strategic Partners

In our discussions about how to move our rather diverse library instruction activities into a more coherent structure with a greater emphasis on information literacy concepts, we looked at those library faculty providing the majority of instruction sessions and the courses where it was being done. This would be one indicator of those disciplines or departments most interested in the acquisition of library research skills. We also sought to identify programs and classes in the institution where the greatest number of students could be reached, preferably early in their academic career. Our rationale was that providing a foundation of information literacy competencies at the Freshman/Sophomore level, would allow us to build on those skills when providing instruction at the upper division level in discipline-specific courses. We found that a substantial amount of

instruction was occurring in sections of the FCP and other writing intensive courses (WIC), and that the required nature of these courses for large numbers of students made them potentially strategic partners.

Approaching the Freshman Composition Program

Historically, the freshman composition classes had not required any research-based writing and previous efforts to introduce library instruction into the curriculum had been in response to requests from individual instructors, rather than a programmatic one. In the Spring of 2001, the Instruction Workgroup approached the coordinator of the program about the possibility of integrating at least some modules from our web-based library tutorial into the curriculum—a foot in the door we hoped. The coordinator, however, was planning to revise the curriculum to both reduce workload for the instructors and increase the focus on a research-based paper and so was very receptive to our arguments about the value of including information literacy components in this new format. As a result of our negotiations, the library was allotted two instruction sessions for each FCP section (approximately 30 per quarter) commencing with classes in the coming Fall term. Despite the greater workload demands that the new instruction sections would place on them, librarians in the R & I department agreed that the program had important implications for the library and were willing to participate.

Lessons Learned

Having a mission statement and objectives for the library's instruction program were vital for obtaining librarians' agreement to proceed with new instruction program efforts. Moreover, in an era of declining resources, when choices must be made about cutting services, it is important that instruction be a **stated** goal of the library. Our experience reinforced the priority placed on these activities by the ACRL "Guidelines" and BPI. Identification of strategic partners also proved fruitful for our workgroup's efforts. We found that there is recognition of the importance

of information literacy outside the library as well -- though librarians may often be responsible for framing the conversation with prospective partners in these particular terms-- and instruction coordinators must be proactive in identifying and taking advantage of such opportunities for collaboration.

Case Study

Planning for Instruction

Several parts of the BPI document address the planning efforts the Instruction Workgroup undertook for this project. *Category 2: Goals and Objectives* calls for the "integration of information literacy across the curriculum**."** *Category 5: Articulation with the Curriculum* states that the instruction program "place the emphasis on students learning (information literacy) in the context of other courses and subjects." And *Category 7: Pedagogy* calls for a wide variety of instructional approaches that support student-centered, active and collaborative learning which acknowledges different learning and teaching styles. While this document suggests benchmarks for best practices in ongoing programs on instruction it leaves the specifics of implementation to the reader. Fortunately, our workgroup brought extensive skills and experience in planning for instruction to our collaboration with the FCP. Our newest member had coordinated an existing instruction program at another university before coming to OSU and had been a high school English teacher. Another workgroup member had experience with developing and implementing a new training program in a business setting. All of us had at least one experience with developing credit bearing courses in higher education. We approached our planning systematically:

1. Identifying the information literacy competencies appropriate and attainable for the library sessions with the FCP

2. Aligning those competencies with the FCP curriculum to create objectives for the instruction program

3. Developing learning activities and assignments

The Instruction Workgroup first examined the ILCS to determine which standards and performance indicators seemed most appropriate and attainable for the FCP, given the time frame and curriculum. Those we proposed to address in the library instruction sessions and assignments are enumerated in Appendix I.

From discussions with the FCP coordinator and assistant coordinator, we learned that many of the other standards/ indicators would be addressed in the class itself through the mechanisms of (re)writes and conferences with instructors.

Early discussions, among the Instruction Workgroup members, and with the FCP coordinators also focused on possible topics and teaching activities for the library units, how these would address the ILCS and where the sessions would best fit in the new FCP curriculum. During these discussions we determined that the library sessions should focus on:

- Structure and flow of information

- Introduction and use of the online catalog

- Use of Academic Search Elite (a multi-disciplinary periodical index with some full-text)

- How to refine search statements

- Evaluation of information sources located by the students

- Reinforcement of the need to appropriately cite sources used

Lastly, we created three lesson plan models for the two-session library instruction, drawing from our own experiences in lesson design and upon the BPI emphases on student-centered activities built upon previous knowledge that promote critical thinking

as well as skill building. As part of the process, we designed a variety of teaching and learning activities to address specific tools and concepts. We also solicited ideas from our library instruction colleagues for activities and materials they had used in other classes and began an online collection of teaching resources that continues to be augmented. Our intentions were twofold: to provide a starting place and resources for library instructors; and to acknowledge the variety of teaching styles and approaches within our own library faculty. There was enough material available so that novices could adopt a lesson plan and accompanying activities wholesale; more experienced instructors could pick and choose elements and activities to incorporate which fit with their individual teaching style or create their own. In addition to the lesson plans and activities, the workgroup created three standard assignments to be completed by all the sections.

- A pre-session assignment based on a tour of the building and a review of circulation policies

- An assignment to be done between the two library sessions which required the students to use the information provided in the first session to locate a reference item, a book and an article related to their chosen topic.

- A research log or journal assignment designed to help the students focus and refine their research process; this was to be handed in with their research–based paper.

Lessons Learned

Developing two hours of instruction seems like a small task. Our undertaking, and that of any instruction coordinator, was complicated by the need to translate information literacy competencies into terms and assignments that could align with the specific course curriculum. We found that coordinators of library instruction must possess a good working knowledge of the ILCS and be

able to move from these goals to specific objectives to be accomplished in

course lessons and assignments. Moreover, coordinators must acknowledge

both varied student learning styles and faculty teaching styles. Our efforts to

develop an *inventory* of teaching approaches, materials and activities that

could be used to address the concepts and tools agreed upon was

appreciated by library faculty.

In the end, the provision of 2 hours of library instruction took several

hundred hours of planning by our workgroup. For those planning for new

instruction programs, it is best to approach such efforts systematically, and it is

valuable to have experience and skills in teaching and instructional design.

Preparing Library Faculty

Category 8: Staff of the BPI recommends that instructional staff "have appropriate

expertise and experience," and "be provided with systematic and continual opportunities

to take part in professional development and training." The Instruction Workgroup

approached this recommendation with

- Assessment

- Professional development opportunities -- using internal and external resources

- Ongoing learning opportunities

Assessment – again. The instruction literature is rife with acknowledgements that

many academic library faculty come ill-prepared to the teaching role (e.g.,Kilcullen,

1998; Mandernack, 1990). Before we undertook to design or provide professional

development opportunities, the Instruction Workgroup completed a needs assessment of

the R & I Department instruction faculty. We surveyed individuals regarding their

instruction-related experiences and needs, requesting information about the amount of

instruction that individuals provided each term, the number of years they had provided

instruction, and the level of 'comfort' they felt in teaching specific levels of students (high

school through graduate students). The survey requested information about their perception of their own knowledge and skill in the areas of presentation skills, lesson design, learning theory and styles and use of the electronic classroom. Finally, we asked about any specific needs for instruction-related training.

Most of our librarians had taught upper division and graduate students but had little experience with incoming freshmen. There were varying levels of comfort with their abilities in the areas surveyed. Although many felt their abilities "adequate" or "very good," it was noteworthy that virtually all attended the workshops we later provided. This parallels the findings of Patterson and Howell (1990) who reported that, although 57% of respondents gave positive self-evaluations of their teaching effectiveness, 64% of respondents indicated a need to improve their teaching skills. Fortunately, academic librarians, ours included, continually seek to become more skillful in this role.

Professional development. In summer 2001, the Instruction Workgroup developed and provided three workshops that addressed areas identified in the survey: lesson design related to instructional theories, presentation skills, and use of the electronic classroom with emphasis on the "mechanics" of the equipment. Workshops were each taught twice at different times and days so that all librarians would have an opportunity to participate. We also set aside time for those who would be teaching FCP sections to draft lesson plans for their classes. This last exercise met with less success and, in fact, was seen as attempting to dictate teaching methods. What seemed to work better, ultimately, was for interested librarians to observe members of the Instruction Workgroup teaching actual FCP sections.

Ongoing learning opportunities. This can take many forms. We are attempting to identify OSU faculty members outside the library who might be able to provide our librarians with additional knowledge and skill in working with students. For example, the coordinator for the School of Education's master's degree program in Adult Education

presented a workshop on student learning styles intended to help us better design our teaching strategies. We hope to expand this method of providing additional professional development opportunities for our library faculty.

We have summarized feedback from student assessments, FCP instructors and coordinators and provided it to library instructors. The Instruction Workgroup also facilitated library instructors learning from each other in a couple of ways. As alluded to earlier, we created a support page on the intranet that included a clearinghouse of teaching resources, and we regularly scheduled informal discussions of our experiences teaching the FCP classes. As suggested by Leadley (1998) there is much to be learned about teaching from sharing experiences and ideas with one another.

Lessons Learned

We found that our library teaching faculty are similar to those discussed in the literature. They have received little or no formal instruction in teaching and are aware of this deficit. They have usually learned to teach on the job and have attempted to improve their skills through reading, observation and workshop or conference attendance. Although they report a fair amount of confidence in their teaching, they are interested in improving their skills. They guard their prerogative to teach in their own way. An instruction coordinator working on developing the skills of her/his own faculty should consider this in the same light as any other adult education undertaking. Faculty development should be preceded by assessment and programs need to be timely, targeted, built on previous experience and respectful of individual differences.

Internal and External Coordination

Category 8: *Staff* also recommends that instructional staff should

- "include or collaborate with program coordinators, graphic designers, distance educators, multimedia authorizing specialists, librarians and classroom faculty

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- have experience in curriculum development and instruction/ teaching, and expertise to develop, coordinate, maintain, and evaluate information literacy

- employ a collaborative approach to working with others"

With the exception of scheduling, the Instruction Workgroup carried out the collaboration functions suggested in this BPI category with the following parties:

Reference and Instruction Department. After the Instruction Workgroup made the initial contact with the FCP Coordinator, and the opportunity to provide library instruction in the program became apparent, we discussed this with the library faculty in the R & I Department. Since they would be heavily involved in the delivery of the instruction it was important to have their support and commitment to the program. This conversation was also important for another reason; for, as McCool (1989), Donnelly (2000) and others have pointed out, when you increase time devoted to instruction, other activities may suffer. Staff development efforts have been detailed above. The Instruction Workgroup also created a "support page" for this project which included sample lesson plans, links to teaching materials, lesson design models, instruction tutorials and instructional standards and models [3].

For fall term, scheduling instructors to teach the composition sections was part of our general reference desk scheduling meeting. In subsequent terms, we just posted the sections and times and asked people to sign up for at least two sections; the Instruction Workgroup members taught the sections not covered in this manner. On the web page created for the library instructors was a list of the FCP instructors with their e-mail and phone contacts.

Other library departments. In early discussions about this project, the Instruction Workgroup recognized the potential demand on other library resources as well. We communicated with the library administration through the acting head of reference, requesting their support. A project proposal with estimated need for resources (money,

people, space, materials) was prepared. Specific requests included exploration of providing additional classroom space, which would also involve additional technical support. Although our desire for a mobile classroom was never realized, we did get enough resources to refurnish a smaller computer equipped training room for situations when two classes had to be scheduled simultaneously. A separate account with photocopy services was set up to better track costs related to this program. Additional coverage was needed to release library instructors from time on the reference desk so the substitute pool was more heavily used.   The perceived impact was even broader as those involved in teaching the composition classes often made this a priority over other duties such as collection development.

Freshman Composition Program. Much of the initial coordination during Spring Term involved the Coordinator of the FCP and, later, his assistant. The Instruction Workgroup met with the 1st year graduate student instructors during their orientation and again just prior to the library sessions. Most of our communication to the FCP instructors, as a group, went through the Assistant Coordinator. The classroom scheduling for 60 class sessions was handled by a library office specialist. The ideal timing for the library sessions would of course be just as the students were starting work on their research based paper. However, due to limited classroom space and staff, scheduling was initially less flexible. For fall term, the two library sessions were scheduled a week apart during weeks 4 through 6 of the 10-week quarter. Each quarter the Instruction Workgroup posted a schedule on a web page of when the composition sections were scheduled into the electronic classroom and who the library instructor would be [4].

Lessons Learned

When working with many parties (in our case, 15 library instructors and 17 FCP instructors) it is important for the instruction coordinator to create formal communication mechanisms as a component of the instruction program. Using a

web page to post schedules, contact information, assignments and resources proved valuable for both library and FCP faculty. Communication by itself, however, is not enough, as communications expert Steve Adubato [5] cogently points out: "Remember, message sent does not always equal message received." When collaborating with other individuals and groups, the instruction coordinator/s must check the communication rigorously for clarity, and build in ways to determine what was understood. Some of our discussions with the FCP coordinators regarding future directions focus on more formally structured opportunities for communication between the FCP coordinators and instructors and the library instructors.

Evaluation and Revision

Category 10: Assessment of the BPI states that assessment of an information literacy program should:

- "be primarily used as part of an ongoing planning / improvement program.
- include measurements of both program and student outcomes. "

The Instruction Workgroup has endeavored to assess the program at large as well as the individual components of the library's sessions. In all quarters, at the end of the second session, composition students and instructors are invited to complete an evaluation of the library instructor's presentation and communication skills, organization and responsiveness. At the end of the first term, we also asked composition instructors to hand out a single page form requesting feedback from students about the perceived value and utility of the various segments covered in the library sessions. These results were summarized and communicated back to both FCP coordinators and library instructors. During the following quarter, we asked composition instructors to allow us to look at the research logs and papers completed by students. The research logs ask many of the same questions about the helpfulness of the different topics presented, about what part of the research process was most difficult and provide a framework for

keeping track of their research efforts. In the third quarter, we asked FCP instructors to have students complete an online information literacy questionnaire, developed by Kent State University Library (O'Connor et al, 2001), prior to the first library instruction session. At the end of the term, an e-mail questionnaire was sent to all the composition instructors.

We have also worked to evaluate the program internally. We summarized the feedback from student assessments at the end of the first quarter of teaching and provided it to library instructors. Every quarter we scheduled a 'brown bag' meeting focused on what worked, issues that needed to be resolved, and suggestions for modification of the assignments or topics.

Several amendments to the library's collaboration with the Freshman Composition Program suggested themselves immediately. The first was the need for flexibility. A tight schedule fit the library's need to maximize limited space and human resources, but did not provide for instruction at the point of students' need in many sections; it was difficult to time the library sessions so that they coincided with the students' work on their research papers. The Instruction Workgroup's response was to continue to schedule the classroom for weeks 4 and 5 in subsequent quarters but to encourage the FCP instructors to change the timing, as librarian schedules and classroom space allowed, to best fit with the individual section's syllabus. Both library and FCP instructors emphasized the need for closer working relationships; the Instruction Workgroup encouraged library faculty in subsequent quarters to schedule themselves to teach sections for just one or two composition instructors or with instructors that they had worked with previously.

Ongoing assessment, while necessary, has not been entirely successful. In doing student assessment, we usually get a 30-40% response rate to surveys and questionnaires, and it's clear, in many cases, that a minimum amount of time has been

given to the responses. It is difficult to meet with FCP instructors; many of them are graduate teaching assistants and their schedules already seem overloaded to them. Feedback from the FCP instructors indicates they favor having the library sessions. The responses, however, also suggest a gap in understanding of the primary purpose for these sessions. Many want more emphasis on tools to the exclusion of conceptual aspects of information literacy.

Lessons Learned

An instruction coordinator(s), in order to implement ongoing assessment, must again rely on formal as well as informal communication mechanisms to work with all parties. Instructors must be given notice well in advance if students are to fill out a questionnaire or survey. Meetings with faculty should be a regular part of the term schedule to monitor for problems and share the successes. It's helpful for the coordinator(s) to have a working knowledge of various assessment methodologies and to understand statistical analyses sufficiently to provide useful data. Finally, the coordinator and all instruction faculty must realize that assessment and evaluation is an integral part of the instructional process, and view any results (especially negative results) as an opportunity for revision.

Conclusion and Future Directions

We can draw some conclusions from our review of the literature and we can draw some from our own individual and institutional experience. In the last three decades, there has been an explosion in the amount written about library instruction. Much is said about the what, why and how of teaching students to become information literate. What seems to be minimally represented in the literature is a discussion of what competencies are needed to initiate and manage a library instruction program. Schonrock & Mulder (1993) and the ACRL "Guidelines for Instruction Programs in Academic Libraries" summarized

the proficiencies needed by individual instruction librarians, and there are certainly aspects of these that can be extrapolated to managing an overall instruction program. Admittedly, we focused our review on the last ten years, but even review articles covering 25 or 30 years by the acknowledged experts do not identify coordinating instruction programs as a theme or key topic (e.g., Rader, 2000).

In spite of the significant cumulative experience of the three Instruction Workgroup members, we still struggled. At the same time that we were attempting to formalize an instruction program, we undertook a sizable collaboration that involved teaching 60 additional hours per quarter with no additional staffing. This particular project put into high relief the issues to be addressed when initiating and coordinating an instruction program. In general, these fall into the general categories of strategic planning, interpersonal skills including communication and an ability to articulate the importance of information literacy in the curriculum, organizational skills, assessment skills and, finally, teaching knowledge and experience.

We feel the team approach, as an alternative way to manage an instructional program, worked in our own case since it provided a greater set of knowledge, skills and experience than any one member of our team possessed. Moreover, being part of a workgroup provided individual members both workload and emotional support during this sometimes stressful project. But, as all members of our workgroup are tenure track faculty with responsibilities in respective subject/service areas, we still advocate for the hiring of an individual instruction coordinator who would have time devoted to this task. If we had the opportunity to hire such an individual to coordinate our instruction program, we would look for these competencies:

- Ability to think strategically and work locally to identify program partners within the library and the institution at large
- Good working knowledge of instructional design and pedagogy/andragogy

- Ability to identify and engage resources (local and/or remote) for faculty development
- Understanding of information literacy competencies and ability to translate these into practical instructional assignments
- Training/ teaching/ coaching skills
- Ability to reflect on the teaching process and make room for learners to reflect on theirs
- Realistic expectations about the speed of implementing change
- Respect for diversity of style and approach
- Excellent communication skills

Ideally you would add to this mix:

- Passion for and commitment to instruction, tempered by a persuasive interpersonal style
- Great organizational skills
- Flexibility
- Patience
- Persistence
- Working knowledge of instructional technology (or ability to work effectively with a consultant)
- Working knowledge of statistics (or ability to work effectively with a statistical consultant)
- A strong professional network (local and/ or virtual)
- Did we mention a good sense of humor and **really** excellent communication skills?

From our recent experience in starting our library's formal instruction program and in implementing our collaboration with the Freshman Composition Program, we can easily outline future directions.

For collaboration with the FCP:

- Continue to refine our sessions based on feedback from students, FCP coordinators and instructors, and library teaching faculty

- Structure more opportunities for building community and facilitating communication between the two groups of instructors (library & FCP)

- Continue to build our clearinghouse of instructional materials and tools, especially focusing on electronically deliverable resources

For the library's instruction program as a whole:

- Complete our student information literacy assessment, begun with FCP and senior students, and analyze the results

- Use the assessment results to refine our instruction program, especially targeting areas of student knowledge deficit

- Use the assessment results to promote, at all levels in the library and the university, the need for integrating information literacy training into the core curriculum

- Continue working with identified institutional partners to promote the teaching role and resource of library faculty

- Continue providing professional development opportunities for library instructional faculty focusing on building theoretical knowledge as well as teaching skills

Notes

1. ACRL Best Practices Initiative, Working Edition, March 2001:

   http://www.ala.org/acrl/nili/criteria.html.

2. <u>ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education</u> (ILCS)

   http://www.ala.org/acrl/ilcomstan.html.

3. Library Instructors Resources Page (for WR121)

   http://osulibrary.orst.edu/instruction/w121/instructors/instructors.html

4. Library Instruction for Writing 121 – Resources

   http://osulibrary.orst.edu/instruction/w121/

5. "To Share the Same Wavelength, Be Nice and Precise." Steve Adubato, Ph.D.

   (http://www.stand-deliver.com/column/article_wavelength.shtml).

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Appendix. Information Literacy Competency Standards and Indicators Selected for Inclusion in Library Sessions with Freshman Composition Program

- **Std 1. Indicator 1** – The information literate student defines and articulates the need for information
- **Std.1. Indicator 2** – The information literate student identifies a variety of types and formats of potential sources for information.

- **Std.2 Indicator 1** – The information literate student selects the most appropriate investigative methods or information retrieval systems for accessing the needed information

- **Std.2 Indicator 2** – The information literate student constructs and implements effectively designed search strategies

- **Std.2 Indicator 3** – The information literate student retrieves information online or in person using a variety of methods

- **Std.2 Indicator 4** – The information literate student refines the search strategy if necessary.

- **Std.3 Indicator 2** – The information literate student articulates and applies initial criteria for evaluating both the information and its sources.

- **Std.4 Indicator 2** – The information literate student revises the development process for the product or performance.

- **Std.5 Indicator 3** – The information literate student acknowledges the use of information sources in communicating the product or performance.