

Using Cultural Perspectives to Foster Information Literacy Instruction Across the
Curriculum

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Introduction

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? There are many factors that influence success in fostering the instructional mission of the academic library, of course, including the skill and commitment of individual instruction librarians, the place that the professionals responsible for instruction hold in the library organization, and the presence (or lack) of instructional leadership at senior levels of the library administration. Another factor that can have a great influence one's success in promoting information literacy instruction across the curriculum is the degree to which instruction of this sort is supported by campus culture. An understanding and appreciation of the many cultures found on the college campus can provide support for information literacy initiatives sponsored by the academic library, and lack of attention to those cultural perspectives can scuttle the most well-intentioned instructional efforts.

Kuh and Whitt (1988) noted that “[almost] as many definitions of culture exist as scholars studying the phenomenon” (p. iii), but ultimately defined the culture of an institution of higher education as “the collective, mutually shaping patterns of norms, values, practices, beliefs, and assumptions that guide the behavior of individuals and groups . . . [on campus] and provide a frame of reference within which to interpret the meaning of events and actions on and off campus” (pp. 12-13). Patterns of campus culture, they continue, shape decisions about governance, curriculum design, faculty recruitment and retention, and relationships with members of the local community. Efforts to establish a Center for Teaching, for example, may succeed or fail based on whether or not there is strong support for a “developmental culture” (Bergquist, 1992) on campus, just as the opportunity to establish an Office of Civic Engagement may rest on whether or not the campus culture includes a commitment to the land-grant mission (or to a religious tradition emphasizing service to others). Likewise, the success or failure of an effort to create an information literacy component for a general education program may be shaped as much by underlying patterns of support for interdisciplinary instructional initiatives within the campus culture as by the political acumen of a library director or instruction coordinator.

Attempts to apply a cultural perspective to an analysis of the opportunities that exist on campus to promote an information literacy agenda are complicated by the overlap and intersection of the multiple cultural demands made on any given individual, i.e., demands rooted in the culture of the institution, the culture of the discipline, and/or the culture of the professional community. A *campus*, for example, may espouse the value of undergraduate education as part of its institutional culture, but the culture of an

academic *department* may place greater value on research than on teaching. As a result of these overlapping (and competing) cultural demands on its faculty members, that department may not present the most fertile ground for a discussion of what information literacy instruction can contribute to undergraduate education. Likewise, while research has shown that the faculty community is often unaware of the scope of the instructional role played by academic librarians (Divay, Ducas, & Michaud-Oystryk, 1987; Oberg, Schleiter, & Van Houten, 1989; Ivey, 1994), it is worth noting that even the professional community of academic librarians does not speak with one voice on the role of the librarian as teacher. This ongoing debate within our own professional culture can have an impact on the instructional services provided by the library to a department, college, or campus. For example, even if the institutional culture of a campus emphasizes collaboration across the curriculum in support of student learning, it is unlikely that information literacy will arise as a successful initiative if the culture of the academic library reflects a commitment to the librarian as collection builder rather than as teacher. These issues rarely present themselves in black and white, but the lesson to be learned in applying cultural perspectives to an analysis of our libraries and our campuses is that, when discussing the “organizational culture” of any institution of higher education, we are actually considering the interplay of multiple campus cultures. Each of these cultural perspectives must be taken into account when planning instructional initiatives in the academic library and promoting information literacy instruction across the curriculum.

This essay will identify issues relevant to academic librarians wishing to take a “cultural perspective” on their work with faculty and other campus communities in order to promote an information literacy initiative across the curriculum. An overview of the

application of the idea of “organizational culture” to institutions of higher education will be provided, as will a discussion of faculty culture and its implications for instructional collaboration between teaching faculty and academic librarians. Finally, a case study will be presented that demonstrates how an appreciation of campus culture can lead to success in promoting an information literacy initiative.

Literature Review

“Organizational culture” may be defined in many different ways (Martin, 1995). At their core, however, most discussions of organizational culture focus on the values, norms, and underlying beliefs that define the appropriate way of conducting business in an organization. Within the context of higher education, one might ask the following questions with an eye for what the answers reveal about campus culture:

- How is excellent teaching rewarded in the promotion and tenure process, as compared with success in the collection of external grants to further one’s program of research?
- How are decisions about the curriculum made and disseminated to members of the academic community?
- In what ways (if at all) are new members of the community socialized into the norms and traditions of the campus?

While answers to these questions may seem discrete, they are often bound together by the underlying web of traditions, values, and beliefs that make up the organizational culture of an institution of higher education. Organizational culture may influence the espoused goals of an institution, as well as its strategic priorities, but it may also influence the way in which individuals communicate with one another, the successes that are touted in

annual reports, and the rituals through which commitment to the institution is renewed and community is celebrated (Kuh & Whitt, 1988).

Cultural approaches to the study of a variety of organizations (especially corporations) have been popular over the past 25 years (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Schein, 1985; Trice & Beyer, 1993), but inquiry into the organizational culture (and myriad sub-cultures) of institutions of higher education has been a subject of study for even longer (Kuh & Whitt, 1988). While libraries have rarely entered directly into studies of organizational culture in higher education, Kaarst-Brown, et al. (2004) and Budd (2005) have described the importance of organizational culture for understanding the place of the academic library on campus and for making decisions about the allocation of library resources and the design and delivery of library services. While these studies provide a foundation for inquiry, there are still many unanswered questions regarding the way that campus culture(s) can support (or undermine) efforts to implement a successful information literacy instruction program. By placing information literacy initiatives into their proper cultural perspective, we may achieve a more accurate view of “what works” (or, “what might work”) on any given campus.

Cultural Perspectives and the Study of Higher Education

Studies of campus culture(s) have appeared in the literature of higher education for almost 50 years (e.g., Sanford, 1962), but attention to organizational (or institutional) culture, faculty culture, and student culture became more consistent starting in the 1970s, as scholars attempted to confront the sea changes in campus life stemming from the upheavals of the previous decade. Works by Clark (1970), Grant and Riesman (1978), and Thelin (1976), for example, explored how the study of organizational culture could

help to identify the unique strengths of “distinctive” academic institutions (Clark, 1970), as well as to explain why curricular reforms or new approaches to campus governance might work on one campus, but not on another. By the 1980s, works by Horowitz (1984) and Thelin and Yankovich (1986) provided examples of how the study of cultural artifacts could add new dimensions to the study of higher education. Thelin (1986), like Clark (1972), also argued persuasively that the research traditions represented in cultural studies (e.g., sociology, anthropology, history) could bring an added dimension to higher education research that would otherwise be defined primarily by empirical studies, and could contribute to effective decision-making by campus leaders. Works by Clark (1987), Horowitz (1987), Bergquist (1992), and Becher and Trowler (2001) have gone beyond the study of broadly-defined campus culture to explore the ways in which multiple student sub-cultures may exist on a single campus, and the ways in which both disciplinary background and institutional type may define a variety of faculty sub-cultures. Given the wealth of research on this topic over the past 35 years, this review of the literature will be highly selective. Interested readers may consult Kuh and Whitt (1988) for a (somewhat dated, but still excellent) introduction to this line of inquiry in the field of higher education.

Cultural Perspectives on Higher Education Administration

The cultural perspective has been applied to a number of questions related to student life and the academic profession, but one of the major concerns for scholars of higher education has been to explore how an appreciation of campus culture can influence (and enhance) educational leadership. A detailed discussion of how the lessons learned in the literature of higher education might apply to the study of library leadership

is beyond the scope of this essay, but even a brief review of seminal works may suggest the broader possibilities of applying cultural perspectives to the study of academic libraries.

Some of the most significant early work applying the cultural perspective to higher education administration came from sociologist Burton R. Clark, who argued that organizational culture can have a powerful influence on campus governance structures (1971) and that organizational theory could benefit from the adoption of a cultural perspective (1972). Clark (1971) argued, for example, that most studies of academic governance focus primarily on structural factors such as the formal powers of the President's office and have neglected "ideological" factors such as loyalty and trust. Factors such as these are key to an individual's "normative bonding" with the organization, and the degree to which such bonding occurs can have a significant impact on issues of governance (p. 499). Clark argued that normative bonding (adoption of the organizational culture by an individual) is facilitated by the existence within the organization of a powerful "organizational saga," i.e., a "collective understanding of [the] unique accomplishments" of the organization and its members (p. 500). Clark (1970) also used the idea of the organizational saga as the framework for examining the evolution of three "distinctive" liberal arts colleges, and articulated the role that campus leaders played in fostering the embrace of the organizational saga by members of the faculty, student body, alumni, and general public. Focusing on the management of meaning in order to bring broad support from across an array of constituent groups to an organization in transition, Clark's work has obvious relevance to academic library leaders in the 21st

century as they struggle to build a campus consensus around the role of the academic library in the Information Age.

Dill (1982) built on Clark's work by identifying the organizational characteristics of institutions of higher education that make the cultural perspective so important for their management. Colleges and universities, he argued, are "value-rational organizations," i.e., organizations in which "members are committed to, and find meaning in, specific ideologies" (p. 310). Because they work in value-rational organizations, educational leaders must be adept at often-neglected skills such as "managing meaning and social integration" (p. 304); in other words, they must be attuned to campus cultures. Libraries, too, are value-rational organizations, with common commitments to intellectual freedom and other ideals espoused in the "Library Bill of Rights" (American Library Association, 2006). Herson, Powell, and Young (2003) have demonstrated how the management of meaning and other dimensions of symbolic leadership are of ongoing significance to library leaders, and this aspect of library leadership has also appeared in the literature as part of the broader discussion of organizational development in libraries (Holloway, 2004; Sullivan, 2004).

Masland (1985) also built on Clark's work by identifying four "windows" through which the organizational culture of an institution of higher education might be explored: saga, heroes, symbols, and rituals (pp. 160-163). Masland concluded that cultural perspectives are critical to effective educational leadership because of the insight they may yield into "conflicting cultural elements" that can lead to negative behavior (p. 166). Because cultural elements such as shared values are often implicit, Masland provides the reader with valuable tools for bringing these issues to the surface where they can become

an explicit part of the planning process and of educational decision-making. Like Clark (1972) and Dill (1982), Masland provides support for the basic notion that an effective leader in any institution of higher education must take cultural perspectives into account as part of what Bolman and Deal (2003) identified as the “symbolic frame” of organizational leadership.

A final foundational entry into this literature can be found in the work of Tierney (1988), who synthesized the early work on organizational culture in order to identify those elements most relevant to management and leadership in the higher education environment. Tierney noted that educational administrators are frequently taken by surprise by the power of local campus cultures, often recognizing significant cultural boundaries only after they have been transgressed (p. 4). In order to provide both researchers and practitioners with tools for identifying key elements of campus culture prior to such transgression, Tierney (1988, p. 8) identifies a series of questions that might be asked by anyone seeking to identify the basic framework of organizational culture on campus (see Figure 1).

Environment:	How does the organization define its environment? What is the attitude toward the environment?
Mission:	How is it defined? How is it articulated? Is it used as a basis for decisions? How much agreement is there?
Socialization:	How do new members become socialized? How is it articulated? What do we need to know to survive/excel in this organization?
Information:	What constitutes information? Who has it? How is it disseminated?

Strategy:	How are decisions arrived at? Which strategy is used? Who makes decisions? What is the penalty for bad decisions?
Leadership:	What does the organization expect from its leaders? Who are the leaders? Are there formal and informal leaders?

Figure 1: A Framework for Asking Questions About Organizational Culture

[Tierney (1988), p. 8].

Like the “culture audit” approach advocated by Kuh and Whitt (1988, pp. 103-104), Tierney’s framework provides concrete structure for educational researchers and leaders wishing to apply a cultural perspective to their work. As higher education administrators responsible for a core campus resource, approaches such as these are as valuable to academic library leaders as they might be to a department chair, dean, or provost.

Perspectives on Difference: Institutional, Disciplinary, and Professional Cultures on Campus

While much of the work on organizational culture in higher education has focused on broad views of the norms and values that help to bring a campus together, there have also been studies identifying the many student, faculty, and professional cultures that co-exist (sometimes with difficulty) on campus. Works such as Horowitz (1987) have provided excellent studies of distinct student cultures on campus, but studies of the cultures of the academic profession, including Clark (1987) and Bergquist (1992), provide the greatest insight into the cultural differences that can influence the success of an information literacy initiative.

Clark (1987), for example, identified how differences in institutional and disciplinary cultures define the lives of individual faculty members. Beginning in graduate school, he argued, future faculty members are socialized into cultural patterns of behavior defined by their disciplines. Disciplinary cultures define the ways in which knowledge is defined, research is conducted, and professional rewards are distributed. At the same time, differences in institutional cultures – e.g., the difference between being employed in an institution focused on undergraduate teaching as opposed to one focused on research – influence the ways in which individual faculty members approach their day-to-day work. To speak of a unified “faculty culture,” Clark concludes, is to gloss over significant and substantive differences in the way the academic profession is approached by those who entered that profession by way of very different paths. The study of disciplinary differences among current and future members of the faculty has been continued by Becher and Trowler (2001), and as part of the Carnegie Initiative on the Doctorate (Golde & Walker, 2006).

Where Clark’s focus was on the impact of institutional and disciplinary differences in the life of individual faculty members, Bergquist (1992) discussed how competing cultural orientations may co-exist on a single campus. He identified four cultural orientations that may be found to a greater or lesser degree on any campus: (1) collegial; (2) managerial; (3) developmental; and (4) negotiating. For the purposes of this essay, the most important distinctions are between the collegial culture (which Bergquist identifies as the dominant culture on most campuses) and the developmental culture. The collegial culture is one in which individuals find meaning primarily through their disciplines and through the original research that helps to further knowledge in that

discipline. The developmental culture, by contrast, is one in which individuals find meaning primarily through their participation in teaching, learning, and professional development activities. More amenable to interdisciplinary approaches to both teaching and research, the developmental culture supports faculty development initiatives aimed at the improvement of instruction (Lewis, 1996; Tiberius, 2002), as well as curricular initiatives such as General Education and Writing Across the Curriculum.

The differences in institutional and disciplinary culture within the broader rubric of “faculty culture” have obvious relevance for any academic librarian seeking to promote information literacy across the curriculum. Does your campus support a vibrant developmental culture into which you might weave your efforts to help classroom faculty identify student learning objectives focused on information literacy? Do the disciplines (as represented by academic departments) with which you hope to work include approaches to teaching and research amenable to collaboration with librarians as aspects of their cultural matrices? Answering these and other questions rooted in a cultural perspective may help you to identify likely campus partners, as well as to identify potential obstacles to the promotion of your instruction program.

A final consideration for the success of an information literacy initiative is the way in which individual professional cultures interact on campus. Engstrom and Tinto (2000), for example, have identified the distinctive “cultural characteristics” of classroom faculty members and student affairs professionals, as well as how these cultural differences can present barriers to collaboration. Likewise, Divay, Ducas, and Michaud-Oystryk (1987), Oberg, Schleiter, and Van Houten (1989), and Ivey (1994) have explored perceptions of the academic librarian’s role on campus among members of the classroom

faculty and have found that the librarian's role as teacher is often misunderstood. When applying a cultural perspective to planning for an information literacy initiative, the cultural differences between institutions, disciplines, and professional communities must all be taken into account.

Cultural Perspectives on Information Literacy Instruction

Finally, while there has been no full-scale application of the cultural perspectives found in the literature of higher education to the study of efforts to promote information literacy across the curriculum, there have been studies that explore critical elements of the cultural perspective for what they can tell us about the potential for success of such an initiative.

Hardesty (1991), for example, identified the influence that campus cultures can have on the willingness of members of the classroom faculty to collaborate with academic librarians in support of information literacy instruction. Through his exploration of the "library educational attitudes" of members of the classroom faculty, Hardesty uncovered important differences rooted in both institutional cultures and disciplinary cultures. Likewise, his description of Earlham College provides a powerful example of how the study of campus culture can identify the "distinctive" elements that can lead to an academic library cementing a place in the instructional landscape of its campus. While Hardesty does not cite Clark (1970) in his exploration of Earlham's unique place in the history of information literacy instruction, his identification of the influence of the Quaker tradition on faculty life and his discussion of the role played by a campus leader (Evan Farber) in the institutionalization of information literacy across the

curriculum are consistent with the cultural perspective on curricular reform and campus leadership taken in earlier studies of organizational culture in higher education.

Grafstein (2002) and Simmons (2005) explored the importance of understanding disciplinary cultures (especially as represented in distinct research traditions) in developing and promoting information literacy instruction across the curriculum. Both authors describe the complementary roles to be played by members of the classroom faculty and academic librarians in the design, delivery, and assessment of information literacy instruction. Grafstein (2002) identifies discrete areas of information literacy instruction to be addressed by members of each professional community, while Simmons (2005) describes the role to be played by academic librarians as “mediators” between the individual disciplinary traditions represented among the classroom faculty. Building on earlier studies of faculty culture and on the sub-cultures into which faculty members are socialized as part of their graduate training in discrete disciplines, both authors provide an intellectual framework for defining the place of information literacy in the curriculum, as well as practical advice for teaching librarians hoping to build a bridge between the generic information literacy skills typically taught as part of lower-division undergraduate instruction programs and the specialized research tools and “discourse communities” relevant to the work of upper-division undergraduate and graduate students in the disciplines.

Elmborg (2003) also addressed the notion of discipline-based communities of intellectual discourse in his comparison of the Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) movement and the instruction movement in libraries. Looking at how both curricular reforms may be nurtured on a campus with a strong developmental culture, Elmborg

provides a framework for understanding the limitations of current theory and practice in information literacy instruction, as well as for thinking about the steps that instructional leaders in libraries might take to help advance the cause in ways similar to those taken over the past two decades by leaders in the WAC movement.

In sum, the cultural perspective allows the academic librarian to ask new questions about “what works” in promoting information literacy instruction across the curriculum and allows the librarian to identify both the departments and programs most likely to present opportunities for instructional collaboration, as well as the obstacles that might need to be overcome in planning for the success of the instruction program.

Case Study in Collaboration: Information Literacy Instruction in Teacher Education

In 2002-03, the author collaborated with faculty members in the Department of Teaching and Learning in the College of Education at Washington State University to integrate information literacy instruction and assessment across the teacher education curriculum. Some aspects of this project were unique, but it was only one in a series of successful instructional collaborations between the Washington State University Libraries and various academic departments, interdisciplinary programs, student services, and extra-curricular activities over the past 20 years (Elliot & Spitzer, 1999; Johnson, McCord, & Walter, 2003; O’English & McCord, 2006; Walter, 2005b). Likewise, teacher education, as a discipline, has long provided opportunities for substantive collaboration between librarians and classroom faculty members in support of information literacy instruction (O’Hanlon, 1988; Shiner & Walter, 2003). Why teacher education? Why Washington State University? By applying a cultural perspective to a report of this

project, we may find not only answers to the familiar question of “what worked,” but also to the equally important question of “why it worked.”

The Institutional Setting

Washington State University (WSU) is one of two comprehensive research universities in the State of Washington (“Doctorate-Granting University – Very High Research Activity”) and was established in 1890 as the state’s land-grant institution. The university maintains its flagship campus in Pullman, a city in the rural, southeastern corner of the state, as well as branch campuses in Spokane, Richland (“Tri-Cities”), and Vancouver. The university also supports ten learning centers located around the state, and cooperative extension offices in each of Washington’s thirty-nine counties. In 2002-03, the Pullman campus enrolled approximately 18,000 FTE students (*WSU Institutional Research Data*, 2006), while thousands more participated in undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education programs in other locations, or delivered through Web-based instruction.

The College of Education (COE) offers undergraduate and graduate degree programs at each of the WSU campuses, as well as teacher certification through its Center for Collaboration with Schools and Communities (formerly known as the Center for Educational Partnerships) (*Education at WSU*, n.d.). In 2002-03, the College of Education was comprised of the Department of Teaching and Learning (T&L) and the Department of Educational Leadership and Counseling Psychology (ELCP), and employed approximately 75 FTE faculty members in fields such as Teacher Education, Educational Leadership, Higher Education Administration, Counseling Psychology,

School Psychology, and Athletic Training (*Accreditation Report: Table of Contents*, 2002).

The WSU Libraries provide a range of collections, information, and instructional services through a network of six libraries on the Pullman campus (Agricultural Sciences, Architecture, Education, Health Sciences, Humanities/Social Sciences, Science and Engineering). In 2002-03, each Pullman campus library was supported by at least one subject specialist responsible for reference, instruction, and collection management in the relevant disciplines. During this project, the George B. Brain Education Library was staffed by 1.25 FTE librarians and provided an array of instructional services to the faculty, staff, and students of the College of Education, including workshop programs, course-integrated instruction, and a for-credit information literacy course (Gen Ed 300) designed for undergraduate majors in the College of Education. Regular contact points for course-integrated instruction between the WSU Libraries and the teacher education program included sessions on how to locate curriculum materials in the library catalog and through other electronic resources (T&L 305), and how to locate biographical information on authors and illustrators of children's literature and reviews of children's literature (T&L 307). During the academic year prior to the start of this project (2001-02), over 400 faculty, staff, and students in the College of Education received direct information literacy instruction through these programs (*Accreditation Report: Standard 6*, 2002).

The CO-TEACH Program

In 1999, the College of Education received a Title II Teacher Quality Enhancement grant from the U. S. Department of Education to support its Collaboration

for Teacher Education Accountable to Children with High Needs (CO-TEACH) program.

Funded for five years for a total of \$9,600,000, the primary goals of the CO-TEACH program were to:

1. enhance and improve teacher education programs;
2. foster active and critical engagement between the teacher education community and the K-12 teachers and administrators in partner schools across the State of Washington;
3. support the recruitment, induction, and continuing professional development of K-12 teachers and administrators serving in high-needs districts;
4. integrate technology into classroom teaching; and
5. increase the number of Native Americans pursuing teaching credentials, and enhance the ability of non-Native teachers to meet the needs of Native students (*CO-TEACH, 2002*).

Focused on developing new approaches to teacher education, fostering collaboration among the many academic departments and programs that contribute to pre-service teacher education, integrating critical thinking instruction across the teacher education curriculum, and promoting pre-service and continuing professional development among practicing teachers in the use of technology in the classroom, CO-TEACH provided numerous opportunities for initiating a discussion of information literacy as an important aspect of teacher education.

One of the major accomplishments of the CO-TEACH program was a thorough revision of the K-8 teacher education curriculum. By the mid-point of the grant cycle,

pre-service teachers enrolled in this program followed a cohort model in which they progressed through a series of well-defined instructional “blocks” (see Figure 2).

Block One: Literacy and Language Arts	
T&L 305	Fundamentals of Instruction
T&L 306	Survey of Elementary Reading and Language Arts
T&L 307	Children’s Literature
T&L 320	Elementary Reading Methods
T&L 402	Instructional Practicum I
Block Two: Content Area Methods	
T&L 352	Teaching Elementary Mathematics
T&L 371	Teaching Elementary Science
T&L 385	Teaching Elementary Social Studies
T&L 405	Instructional Practicum II
Block Three: Diverse Learners	
ED PSY 401	Classroom Assessment
T&L 310	Classroom Management
T&L 403	Social Foundations of Education
T&L 413	Introduction to English as a Second Language (ESL)
T&L 445	Methods of Educational Technology
T&L 490	Advanced Practicum
SPED 420	Teaching in Inclusive Classrooms

Figure 2: K-8 Teacher Education Curriculum, Washington State University, AY 2002-03.

Just as many of the overall goals of the CO-TEACH program could be promoted through a discussion of information literacy instruction, the broader environment of curricular reform and pedagogical innovation fostered by grant-related activities provided a unique opportunity for collaboration.

What Worked: Promoting Information Literacy Instruction Through Faculty

Development

Because curriculum reform and faculty development were two of the primary avenues through which CO-TEACH leaders aimed to meet program goals, our approach to integrating information literacy instruction across the curriculum focused on preparing teacher education faculty to integrate information literacy instruction into their own courses.

To facilitate this process, a “Faculty Collaboration Action Plan” was submitted for review that identified the following program activities:

1. Provide a professional development opportunity for WSU faculty and students, as well as teachers from CO-TEACH partner schools, to increase their understanding of information literacy; and
2. Develop a strand in the K-8 teacher education program in which pre-service and in-service teachers will learn about models of information skills instruction and develop activities or lesson plans that integrate information skills instructional objectives with content area instructional objectives.

The “Action Plan” also identified three research questions applicable to CO-TEACH program goals:

1. What are effective strategies for increasing the information literacy skills of pre-service teachers?
2. How do university professors and instructors model information literacy skills in methods courses?

3. How can teacher preparation programs respond to the planned assessment of information literacy competency, as mandated by the State Legislature?

Funded through CO-TEACH based on the “Action Plan,” faculty development activities conducted during 2002-03 included:

1. a half-day workshop conducted by WSU librarians on basic concepts related to information literacy instruction and assessment, standards for information literacy instruction at the K-12 and college levels, and current status of information literacy instruction on campus, and, specifically, in the College of Education;
2. a full-day workshop conducted by Mike Eisenberg and Lorraine Bruce from the University of Washington School of Information on the Big 6 model of information literacy instruction <<http://www.big6.com>> and its applications in the elementary classroom (Eisenberg & Berkowitz, 1999); and,
3. review of revised course syllabi in Block One and Block Two courses to identify existing course assignments that included (implicitly or explicitly) one or more dimensions of the Big 6 approach.

The goal of these faculty development activities was to develop revised course assignments or syllabi that made one or more dimensions of information literacy into explicit student learning objectives. Moreover, these activities were designed to promote a holistic view of information literacy in teacher education, i.e., a view that addressed the needs of the pre-service teacher as student, as teacher, and as potential instructional collaborator with site-based information professionals (i.e., school librarians) (Walter &

Shinew, 2003). While space will not allow a detailed description of each of these components of the faculty development program, it should be noted that each of the participating faculty members from Block One and Block Two courses did submit revised syllabi for review. The process of discussing discrete information literacy components already embedded in existing coursework also provided an opportunity for faculty members to examine a dimension of the teacher education program that had not been explored in previous discussions of the curriculum and of desired student learning outcomes.

Why It Worked: A Culture of Collaboration

A basic requirement for the success of any information literacy initiative is willingness among the classroom faculty to collaborate with librarians on issues related to teaching and learning, and models for effective collaboration have been a prominent feature of the library literature (Dewey, 2001; Haynes, 1996; Raspa & Ward, 2000). A commitment to collaboration is a feature of the institutional culture at Washington State University, and is represented prominently in the current strategic plan, which identifies “Teamwork” as a core institutional value, and which identifies the following among its core institutional goals: “[To create] a university culture that supports efficient and effective collaboration” (*Strategic Plan in Detail*, n.d.). Likewise, teacher education is an inherently collaborative discipline based not only on collaboration among classroom faculty teaching members of a cohort group in an instructional block of courses, but also on collaboration between faculty in the College of Education and faculty in other Colleges providing instruction in content areas such as Mathematics, English, and History (*WSU College Partners*, n.d.). If collaboration is key to the success of an

information literacy initiative, then there is ample evidence that both the campus culture at Washington State University and the disciplinary culture of teacher education support such an effort.

Why It Worked: A Developmental Culture

Bergquist (1992) discussed the impact that a strong “developmental culture” can have on campus, especially in areas related to teaching and learning. There is a strong developmental culture at Washington State University, as evidenced by the existence of programs including General Education and Writing Across the Curriculum, as well as by a number of faculty development initiatives coordinated through the Center for Teaching, Learning, and Technology (*Office of Undergraduate Education*, n.d.). Likewise, faculty development (especially as related to improvement of instruction) was a focus for the CO-TEACH program. Again, if a developmental culture is one in which interdisciplinary initiatives and initiatives aimed at supporting innovations in teaching and learning should thrive, one would expect both the institutional culture at Washington State University and the culture of the Department of Teaching and Learning to provide support for discussions of integrating information literacy across the curriculum.

Why It Worked: Building Bridges to Disciplinary Culture

Grafstein (2002) and Simmons (2005) have described the importance of disciplinary cultures for the development and promotion of information literacy initiatives, and their work complements the broader discussions of the significance of disciplinary culture in academic life found in works such as Clark (1987) and Bergquist (1992). While the faculty development workshops at the heart of this project focused on many of the “nuts and bolts” of information literacy instruction (e.g., standards, models

for instruction and assessment), the discussion was rooted in the broader concerns inherent to the field of teacher education. Rather than focusing on issues related to the research tradition in the field, however, the focus was on overarching concerns about the development of competent teachers for the 21st century. Among the most important bridges to instructional collaboration between the WSU Libraries and the teacher education faculty developed through these workshops were built on discussions of:

1. the impact of information literacy instruction on K-12 student learning – participants reviewed the work of the Library Research Service (2006) to introduce the notion that information literacy instruction has an impact on academic achievement among K-12 students;
2. the digital divide and the role of information literacy instruction in supporting high-needs students – participants discussed the impact of the digital divide in making the transition to higher education even more difficult for students coming from high-needs schools (the focal point for the CO-TEACH program) to introduce the notion that increasing the number of information literate teachers may provide critical support to students in schools where access to information resources and information technology may be limited;
3. support for teachers in the field – participants discussed the role that school librarians could play in providing instructional support to student teachers and facilitating their success in the classroom and their transition into their first professional positions; and

4. assessment and accreditation – participants discussed how a program of information literacy assessment could provide data on student learning outcomes required as part of campus-wide assessment activities, as well as how information literacy instruction could provide evidence of programmatic attention to relevant accreditation standards. Equally important, content methods faculty members explored how information literacy standards related to standards for K-12 student learning identified by professional associations such as the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE).

In short, information literacy was not discussed as an independent learning goal, but rather as a means of achieving recognized goals in the field and in the department. Information literacy, moreover, was discussed not only as a goal for the pre-service teacher, but as an ongoing need for the reflective educational practitioner. Building on the concerns within the disciplinary culture related to the preparation and continuing professional development of K-12 teachers in the 21st century provided a powerful impetus for discussions of instructional collaboration between the WSU Libraries and the College of Education.

Applying the Cultural Perspective

The CO-TEACH information literacy project fostered a year-long discussion of information literacy instruction and assessment among the teaching faculty of the K-8 teacher education program, but it also made information literacy instruction and assessment part of broader discussions across the College of Education about teacher education and the professional development needs both of K-12 teachers and of teacher

educators. While it would be easy to suggest that the success of the program was based on the skills and interests of the individuals involved, that would ignore the lessons about promoting information literacy as a departmental or campus initiative that the cultural perspective can provide.

First, scan your campus for evidence of a developmental culture. Are interdisciplinary instructional initiatives or programs focused on student learning visible on your campus, e.g., General Education, First-Year Experience, Writing Across the Curriculum? Is there an Honors College on your campus, or a Writing Center? Are faculty development initiatives focused on improvement of instruction supported on your campus, e.g., Center for Teaching Excellence, Center for Teaching with Technology? Each of these programs was available at Washington State University, and the presence of a developmental culture and of faculty members accustomed to participating in professional development programs provided an essential foundation to the success of the CO-TEACH information literacy project (as it has to the success of other information literacy projects at WSU).

Second, consider the disciplinary culture in which your potential partners have been steeped. Success in promoting information literacy across the curriculum depends on designing instruction that speaks to the distinct research traditions of a field, but also to broader concerns. The appeal of information literacy to members of the teacher education faculty was rooted not just in the use of discipline-specific research tools, but in making explicit the importance of information literacy for pre-service teachers, in-service teachers, and K-12 students. Student services programs have likewise proven to provide excellent opportunities for information literacy instruction because of the deep

commitment within the professional culture of student affairs professionals to supporting student success in the classroom (Walter & Eodice, in press). Even at an institution like Washington State that has made collaboration a key element of its institutional culture, there are certain departments and programs that exhibit disciplinary or professional cultures especially well-suited to the development of an information literacy instruction program. Scan your local environment for evidence of similar cultures and look for your partners there.

Third, evaluate the culture of your library. The ability to promote information literacy across the curriculum depends on the degree to which your library peers and your library administration support instruction as a core library service. Walter (2005a) has described the importance of fostering a “culture of teaching” in the academic library as crucial to the continuing professional education of instruction librarians, but also as a critical support for an information literacy program. Whether the measure was allocation of human resources, provision of continuing education opportunities, attention to the evaluation of teaching, or statements by the library administration regarding the importance of the library’s role as an instructional center on campus, Washington State University demonstrated a healthy and deep-rooted culture of teaching in its libraries. In what ways – both structural and symbolic – does your library (and your library leadership) demonstrate a commitment to fostering a culture of teaching? Will you have the broad-based support you will need for implementing an information literacy program across the curriculum? If not, how might you build support?

Finally, identify not only the opportunities made evident to you through the application of a cultural perspective, but also the obstacles. Engstrom and Tinto’s (2000)

description of the cultural barriers to collaboration between student affairs professionals and members of the teaching faculty is informative and further study of the differences between the culture of academic librarians and the culture of classroom faculty may help us to refine our approach to collaboration in support of information literacy instruction across the curriculum.

Conclusion

Information literacy instruction programs exist within a complex network of campus cultures. In order to foster the success of an information literacy program, it is important to understand which aspects of the culture of your campus, your partner programs, and your own library support the core values of information literacy instruction. A deep understanding of every campus culture may not be a reasonable expectation to have of the already harried instruction coordinator, but it is important for the instructional leaders of an academic library to be ready to apply a cultural perspective to their work as part of any major information literacy initiative. As the example from Washington State suggests, an appreciation for campus culture, disciplinary culture, and professional culture on campus can help you both to identify your most likely partners, as well as to identify language with which to fruitfully engage some (if not all) of your skeptics.

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