

Report on Library Instruction 2001-2010

The mission of the Kreitzberg Library is to support the academic and administrative work of the University. As a student's ability to effectively conduct research in their areas of study is critical to their academic success, providing information literacy instruction is a critical part of fulfilling our mission. The library has provided instruction for many years, but over the past few years, our role as partners with faculty in information literacy instruction has grown as more and more faculty have sought out our services in curriculum design, assignment design, and instruction provision. In recognition of the importance of information literacy instruction, the library created the position of Head of Instructional Initiatives in 2008 to coordinate library instruction work and move the library forward in this area. The library has also made teaching a part of the job of every librarian, increasing the number of individuals available to teach.

The library instruction program has grown significantly over the past decade from a minor part of a few librarians' job duties into a major library-wide effort and a significant aspect of our work. In FY01, only 42 classes were taught by two full-time librarians and several part-time librarians. At that time, the majority of courses taught were at the basic EN101/EN102 level rather than in the disciplines. Sessions were taught in the library multipurpose room, which only contained one computer so the sessions were lecture-style rather than participatory. There was minimal growth in the number of library instruction sessions taught in the first seven years of the decade. In FY05, only 59 classes were being taught by three full-time librarians and FY07 saw a slight increase to 65. In the Fall of 2004, the electronic classroom was built, which included 12 computers for student use during library instruction session. This allowed librarians to design active learning components to their information literacy instruction.

It wasn't until FY08 that the program started to grow by leaps and bounds. That year, 101 information literacy sessions were taught to 1760 students and 9 library staff were teaching in the instruction program. This is an increase in classes taught of almost 50%. FY 09 saw an increase of 33% in the number of classes taught, raising the total to 134. This year, we have taught 148 classes to 2626 students.

	FY01	FY02	FY03	FY04	FY05	FY06	FY07	FY08	FY09	FY10
Classes Taught	42	67	60	63	59	53	65	101	134	148
Students Reached	Unknown	1221	1136	1227	1214	906	1140	1760	2222	2626
Library staff teaching	2.5	2.5	3	4	4	6	7	9	9	9.5

In addition to teaching more information literacy sessions, the greatest increases have come in the disciplines rather than in basic EN101/102 instruction. In FY10, 91 out of 148 sessions were discipline specific and were taught at various levels (from 100-400). That year, 44 library sessions were taught in the social sciences, 19 in Math/Science, 10 in Business, 8 in Humanities (not including the 57 EN 101/102 classes), 6 in Engineering and 4 in Architecture. Library instruction has become a major part of core courses for majors in History, Engineering and Nursing, with more intensive instruction in those courses.

Librarians are attending faculty meetings, offering workshops for faculty, and are assertively promoting library instruction in their liaison areas.

It is useful to compare this data with the library instruction programs at our peer colleges and universities. In 2001, the average number of library sessions taught annually by institutions granting Master's degrees was 117, and at institutions granting Bachelor of Arts degrees, the average was 72. Around this time, we were teaching 42 classes per year.

In 2001, information literacy instruction was not integrated throughout the University curriculum and was not included in the General Education requirements. At that time, 47% Master's degree-granting institutions stated that information literacy was integrated throughout the curriculum of programs. For Bachelor's degree-granting institutions, the total was 44.5%. Also, only 38% of Master's degree-granting institutions and 34% of Bachelor's degree-granting institutions had information literacy outcomes included in the general education program goals and objectives. In 2010, information literacy is still not integrated throughout the curriculum of all academic programs, though the number of programs in which information literacy is taught has grown. In 2009, the University Curriculum Committee approved new wording in General Education Goal #1 that requires that students are able to "exercise the skills of independent inquiry, that is, to find, analyze, synthesize, and critically evaluate information."

The most recent data on the number of instruction sessions taught by institutions granting Bachelor's and Master's degrees is from FY07. That year, the median number of library instruction sessions taught at institutions granting Bachelor's degrees was 73 and was 166 for institutions granting Master's degrees. That year, our total number of courses taught was 101, which is comparable, especially given that the number of classes reflect only those taught to the undergraduate population. Since then, we have seen a significant increase in the number of classes we have taught annually.

In addition to the courses taught face-to-face to undergraduate students, the library has been creating asynchronous instructional tutorials for our online graduate students for many years. In 2007, the library also started creating online subject guides, course guides and tutorials for undergraduates as well. For the undergraduate students, we currently have 25 tutorials, 30 subject guides and 44 course guides created by the relevant subject liaisons in the library. Student use of the guides is growing, indicating the value of these resources. Many of the guides were built at the request of faculty to support a specific course or assignment. Students and faculty have reported high satisfaction with the research guides and faculty often link to the guides in their NUoodle classroom or require their students to utilize them. The graduate students also have 20 tutorials tailored to their specific needs, created by the distance learning librarian and relevant subject liaisons. Students frequently offer positive comments in surveys regarding the value of these tutorials and request that more be created in their subject areas.

While increasing the number of sessions taught and the variety of courses in which we were involved is notable, the librarians have also been working to improve their instructional efficacy. In 2001, all classes were taught lecture-style where students were passive observers of the librarian instructor. In FY09, 82.5% of all information literacy sessions included an active learning component that helped students to practice what they learned. In FY10, the number had risen to 84% of all information literacy sessions. In

FY09, the orientation for Rooks and civilian freshmen was transformed from a tour of the library to a scavenger hunt that taught students library-related skills through competitive activities.

The librarians have also been using assessment to improve instructional effectiveness. Prior to FY09, most assessments of library instruction came in the form of a satisfaction survey. That year, the library staff committed to experimenting with new models of assessment that might provide more meaningful feedback on their teaching. In EN 101 and 102, students completed a worksheet that assessed their understanding of what they were taught in class and was graded by the librarians based on a common rubric. The worksheet was then returned to the student and served the dual purpose of assessing our performance as instructors and reminding students of what they had found in their searches.

In most 100-300-level history and criminal justice courses, students utilized performance-based assessment worksheets similar to EN 101/102, though these were graded by the faculty member who then provided feedback to the librarian instructor. Engineering students also completed an assignment that doubled as a performance-based assessment of student learning. In other classes, librarian instructors used surveys that asked students to describe what they'd learned, what they wish had been explained better, and how they rated the quality of instruction and relevance to their work.

The library participated in a peer review of instruction in Spring 2010. Each librarian observed two other librarian instructors teaching classes and subsequently discussed their performance and provided them with written evaluations. This served the dual purpose of each instructor getting feedback on their own teaching approach and getting ideas for teaching from observing their colleagues.

The library instruction team has made significant progress over the past several years in the teaching and promotion of information literacy, but there is still so much that we would like to do in terms of improving our own instructional effectiveness and extending our reach. While some academic programs are teaching information literacy – either with a librarian or not – at increasingly advanced levels, others are not, and we hope to play a greater role at the University-level to ensure that every student receives the information literacy instruction necessary to be effective researchers and lifelong learners.