York University Libraries

**Curriculum-Integrated Approaches to Information Literacy**

Strategies, tips, success stories and challenges shared by York librarians

*Prepared by Sophie Bury & Ilo Maimets for Information Literacy Retreat, April 30th 2012. With sincerest thanks to the librarians who contributed.*

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Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) Program/Sophie Bury & Toni Olshen & Elizabeth Watson

Brief description of the curriculum integration in place

At the business library we have definitely had most success with the BBA program where we are embedded at four different points within the program – three times in core courses and once in a finance course (taken by finance majors only). We see all sections of students in MGMT 1040 Ethics, Social Responsibility and Sustainability in Business. The focus here is on teaching basic business research skills especially finding articles and criteria to consider when evaluating business information sources. We also talk about the catalogue and citing resources. We build on the skills taught in MGMT 1040 in MKTG 2030 Marketing Management which has been in place since 2006. Students have to prepare a marketing plan for a new product. This provides an excellent opportunity to introduce them to sources they can use for competitor information, as well as industry resources, sources of information on customers and consumer demographics and using articles for market research purposes. One of our more recent successes has been integration within a third core course ORGS 2010 Organizations and Environments. Here the focus is on the organizational culture of corporations and so we introduce them to resources that can help them with this special lens they need to apply.

In addition to these core courses, all the student who major in finance also receive an IL class which introduces them to the specialized finance resources and data sources. This instructional session is integrated within FINE 3100 Financial Management.

Getting your foot in the door

We were already embedded in a core 1st year course and wanted to build on that. We identified a core 2nd year course, where the marketing plan assignment allowed us to teach more advanced research skills. This has been an ongoing success since 2006.

So we’d suggest it’s useful to familiarize yourself with the curriculum of programs you liaise with in terms of the course content and assignments. If you can identify courses that already have library research expectations or where students’ performance on assignments could clearly benefit through IL instruction it is useful to build partnerships here. Typically you can get course syllabi on the web and also you may become aware of assignments through inquiries at the reference desk. All the better, if the courses you identify are core or required, thereby ensuring you reach all students at strategic points in the program. In order to facilitate progressive building of skills it’s useful if you identify courses at least two different levels within the program.

When we identified MKTG 2030, with a marketing plan assignment, as a way to build on skills already being taught in MKT1040, we approached the course director providing a rationale for what we proposed. The instructors came on board very quickly and all sections of this core course now have a one hour IL session with us every year. To keep your foot in the door I think it can help to administer an evaluation so you can get student feedback on the quality and value of the session and share that with professors.

It is important that you use liaison opportunities to highlight other IL sessions you have provided and the value they have in improving the quality of the assignments and in providing the students with research skills they can take into the workplace. Be prepared with quotes from other IL session evaluations you have delivered.
Building successful IL-related curriculum

If you are integrated within several different points in a program, it’s important to articulate IL learning outcomes at each of these different points. These are obviously shaped by the learning outcomes for the course and the assignments which apply. It’s important that there isn’t huge overlap between them because the idea is to progressively build skills and to engender in students both lower-order and higher-order IL competencies. At each point where we teach in the BBA the assignments look very different and the content we cover therefore reflects this. Having said that we all know that a one-shot is never sufficient to leave students with mastery of the IL skills we teach. As research is an interactive and complex process, there is value in refreshing students’ memories on concepts and resources and so we also try to do this as part of the IL instruction that occurs throughout the BBA program. Creating supporting web pages directly related to the IL session taught helps reinforce the resources taught and the need for citation etc.

BBA students are undergraduates, of course, so ensuring active learning where possible is essential. We find this generation need a lot of stimulation! In MGMT 1040 where we can use the library lab this has proved possible through integrating clicker technology and group hands-on exercises. In MKTG 2030 and ORGS 2010 we visit the lecture-halls and classes are bigger so this is more challenging, though we aim to foster Q&A wherever possible.

In all the BBA courses we teach we ask students to fill out an evaluation and this has definitely helped us to enhance our instruction and to build a case for its value with faculty. Course directors may change and so it can be very useful to have such evidence where this happens and levels of support might vary. For several years we conducted pre-tests/post-tests with student in MGMT1040 and this showed that students were learning something as average scores did increase when post-tests were administered several weeks after the library sessions were delivered. In an ideal world, it’d be nice to be more involved in collaboratively designing assignments with the faculty to foster attention to IL but given the mandates of the BBA curriculum right now we do quite well.

Spinoffs from successes (if applicable), e.g. maybe this model was used elsewhere with another program or helped generate other collaborative projects with students or faculty

There hasn’t been a direct spin-off from this success to date. But when speaking with faculty in the School of Administrative Studies or in the School of Human Resource Management it is referred to as a model which is working well and we’re hoping to make progress on this front in other programs!

Biology/Ilo Maimets

Brief description of the curriculum integration in place

Currently the "best" instance is in Biol3100 where within one course, we have 5 two to three hour classes devoted to library research, in-class exercises and take-home assignments. 40 to 45% of the final grade from this 2-credit course is generated from these assignments.

Getting your foot in the door

- I have been active in the Committee on Teaching and Learning (CoT&L) in FSE for a number of years, and I bring up the topic of IL integration whenever it is appropriate to in the meetings. This has maintained an awareness of the library, librarians and subject-specific resources among teaching faculty, many of whom have (recently) admitted to not knowing how to use library resources for searching.
• Responding to faculty request made out of despair over poor writing, citing and plagiarism - I didn’t need to "sell" the idea, but I did need to be available to put extensive efforts into creating the assignments, pre- and post-tests, and evaluation tools that were adopted.

• Now, several years after collecting student evaluations on timing and delivery of this content, it is being reorganized by a group called Literacy Skills 1 2 3 (LS123) – that had grown out of the CoT&L group – for scaffolded delivery in first and second year core biology courses and Biol3100 as well. They are very much focussed on outcomes-based teaching and experiential education, and are open to library involvement.

Building successful IL-related curriculum

• Having librarians with subject expertise (including an understanding of and experience with disciplinary research processes) is helpful in building credibility and connections with faculty and graduate students

• Providing examples of learning outcomes, assignments, and evidence from other institutions to support the work of CoT&L and LS123 targeted to Biology. Supporting faculty suggestions of implementation models with support from CI maps from other institutions.

• Embedding assessment into the curriculum i.e. assignments that combine subject content with research process (for marks), pre- and post-tests (library diagnostics), student evaluations (program improvement)

Spinoffs from successes (if applicable), e.g. maybe this model was used elsewhere with another program or helped generate other collaborative projects with students or faculty

• Within Biology:
  Regular working meetings with LS123 where the UGPD, instructors for core courses Biol1000, Biol2000 and Biol3100 and the subject librarian work on curriculum mapping and scaffolding the integration of IL and acquisition of writing skills throughout the program. Library involvement in this process is largely dependent on the successes as well as frustrations (why is this being taught so late?) experienced by students in Biol3100.

• Other programs:
  Physics and Astronomy were interested several years ago in what we were doing in Biology, and have integrated a Physics version of the Biol3100 option into their program.
  Now, also, it seems that Geography may be interested as Laura has been telling students and faculty about what we did in Biology. I have also shared my assignments and other content with Maura, and a few other librarians at York who have shown an interest in CL.

Challenges

The difficulties with integrating IL into the first and second years of a program like biology, is finding a venue where all students can be reached. The LS123 committee is grappling with how to restructure all the facets of the IL program including: teaching, in-class exercises, take home assignments, marking, answering student questions, TA support (and that means teaching the TA’s what they need to know to support the undergraduates, marking schemes, etc.), that is designed for 100 students to work for 1500 students in first year classes. Lectures were tried and found not to work (no surprise!), online videos were never accessed or used by the students, and the only venue where we could even remotely recreate the 3100 experience is in the labs. These are run in 3 concurrent groups of 25: morning, afternoon and night, 5 days a week for 2 weeks. And there is 1 computer lab on
campus in the TEL building that can hold 75 students. Laptops are out of the question because they are so slow that they are almost useless. So we are working on some creative solutions.

**Law & Society/Maura Matesic**

**Brief description of the curriculum integration in place**

Writing Program - WRIT 3393 - 4 classes & 3 assignments
2 Courses
SOSC 3363 - Research Strategies in Law & Society, SOSC 3364 Designing Research in Law & Society taught by librarian. IL integrated throughout.

**Getting your foot in the door**

Speak up during the Program Review meetings with the external and internal reviewers. All programs of study are interested in developing and becoming better. Including a discussion of IL integration is a way for the program to further create opportunities for integrated student learning.

**Building successful IL-related curriculum**

Move away from the database point & click model of teaching IL and into teaching ideas, concepts and issues. I am aware that we do some of this now, but to create meaningful IL curriculum integration it has to be more than the databases or it will not be successful.

**Spinoffs from successes (if applicable), e.g. maybe this model was used elsewhere with another program or helped generate other collaborative projects with students or faculty**

n/a

**Other comments**

Designing and teaching a research course, or developing IL integration modules, is demanding but extremely rewarding. It is a wonderful way to connect with students and faculty and to participate in the larger academic forum. Moving forward, I believe that this form of academic integration, coupled with subject expertise and collection knowledge, is crucial to the ongoing relevancy of academic librarians in higher learning environment.

**Music/Rob van der Bliek**

**Brief description of the curriculum integration in place**

I teach a first year required Master’s course titled "Problems and Methods of Musical Research." The course has been on the books for 30 years and has been taught by different people in different ways. Since 1990 I have had a regular slot in the course, beginning with one or two classes, but beginning in 2006 I became more involved, first by taking on a block of six classes, then one full term, and now two terms. This is the third year I've been running it on my own and I've completely redesigned the syllabus. The first few weeks are spent on library and internet resources, with exercises designed to get students to understand the ambiguities and complexities of the bibliographic universe. Then there are modules on

- defining a research topic and thesis
- ethnomusicology and musicology as disciplines
• methods and terminology
• historiography
• style/genre
• performance practice, notation and transcription
• musical analysis
• ethnography and fieldwork
• the scholarly monograph
• case studies (e.g., the Beatles, Adorno, Music and Text, Improvisation)

The goal of the course is to write and abstract, present a paper (conference style), and submit a written paper of original research suitable for publication.

Getting your foot in the door

My involvement with the graduate program in music began with guest lectures, colloquia, and appointment to FGS with subsequent responsibilities in directed readings and thesis committee work. It evolved over twenty years, as I developed a reputation as a scholar through publishing and presenting in musicology and music.

Building successful IL-related curriculum

Not sure what to say about this other than that my success has to do with the fact that I am considered part of the faculty.

Spinoffs from successes (if applicable), e.g. maybe this model was used elsewhere with another program or helped generate other collaborative projects with students or faculty

More and more work...

Nursing/Ilo Maimets

Brief description of the curriculum integration in place

This year I was asked to give many classes undergraduate classes in September/October. They were all “one-offs”, most being 90 minutes to 2 hours long. A somewhat spontaneous “CI” occurred when the students and I discovered that in the second wave of classes, most of them had already had a class with me in another course. The result was that in the second wave of classes, we focussed on reviewing Evidence-based practice theory and resources in more detail, and worked through more specific examples that were relevant to student assignments – we didn’t have to spend any time on the resources, search strategies etc.

Perhaps the "best" instance is in Nurs5500 where within one course, we have one extensive three hour class devoted to library research in Evidence-based nursing. This is a Masters level course, and the delivery system is Adobe Connect, so that we can deliver the class to students in-class in a hands-on face-to-face session that is simultaneous with webcasting to distance students who attend online. The professor fields questions through the chat feature and alerts me to them when they might be of interest to the larger group. Sadly, these students have never received IL classes before, and so the class has to cover from the most basic to the most complex involving evidence-based practice. The breakdown of the class is:

• 90 minutes on library resources for nursing and how to use them in research
• 45 minutes on the hierarchy of evidence: study design
• 45 minutes on the levels of pre-appraised evidence: how to find it, evaluate it, and use it for practice

Getting your foot in the door

• In the past I was very much involved with attending SoN council meetings and giving presentations about new services and resources.
• In nursing a few changes have taken place. There is a movement in nursing at York from being a strictly Theory-based program to a much more hybrid theory and evidence-based practice (EBP) program, even tending more to EBP. Faculty have to adopt EBP as the primary driving force for research and practice, and they rely on the library to provide extensive support for this switch. So I cannot say that I need to "sell" the idea anymore to nursing. Now it is more a question of keeping up with the demand for classes because many faculty are not very comfortable with teaching EBP resources.

Building successful IL-related curriculum

• Having librarians with subject expertise is helpful in building connections with faculty
• Bringing in examples of learning outcomes, assignments, and evidence from other institutions builds credibility
• Embedding assessment into the curriculum i.e. assignments that combine subject content with research process (for marks), pre- and post-tests (library diagnostics), student evaluations (program improvement)

Spinoffs from successes (if applicable), e.g. maybe this model was used elsewhere with another program or helped generate other collaborative projects with students or faculty

Within Nursing:
1. One of the spin-offs from being heavily involved in teaching IL over many years is that when the new QAF was introduced, I approached the committee charged with creating the student questionnaire to be included with formulating and introducing questions that are library and specifically IL focussed. The result was that 7 questions involving the library were added to the online questionnaire for the MScN program.
2. Another spin-off is that the professor teaching 5500 suggested that we collaborate on proposing and teaching an elective course on evidence-based practice that is open to all students in the Faculty of Health.

Other programs:

A new Global Health program has been proposed in the Faculty of Health, and a library support statement was requested. The program draws from a variety of disciplines, and it has 3 proposed streams, both Science and Social Sciences based. All streams have a few core courses in common that are new courses. This could be an opportunity to integrate IL from the ground up – while the courses are being designed. The program support statement has included suggestions of IL integration.

Physics/Leila Fernandez

Brief description of the curriculum integration in place

For a third year course in experimental physics methods, I teach a total of 4.5 lectures for one hour on a weekly basis at the beginning of the fall term. The course is intended to help students with their lab reports by identifying
suitable sources to include, format of a typical lab report and citation practice. Ethical considerations are reinforced during the lectures.

**Getting your foot in the door**

Use any opportunity to mention what you can offer. Ilo used a chance meeting with a physics faculty member who was an internal referee for the biology UG program review. Choose an area which is not being served or in which you have particular expertise.

**Building successful IL-related curriculum**

Make an inventory of campus courses related to areas of publishing which may need the expertise of librarians. Develop strengths in copyright, journal evaluation methods and metrics which are grey areas for faculty. Develop a series which can be replicated in different areas and subjects. If you are given only one session, make it targeted. Sometimes less is more. An FAQ with links may provide capsuled information with follow-up if necessary. We need to evaluate and refine our approach constantly as keeping on top of changes is something faculty don’t have time for this.

**Spinoffs from successes (if applicable), e.g. maybe this model was used elsewhere with another program or helped generate other collaborative projects with students or faculty.**

Not yet. In the absence of an outcomes based approach this is difficult. If students can take back one new idea we may show we have made a difference and use that to convince other faculty.

**Professional Writing /Scott McLaren**

**Brief description of the curriculum integration in place**

AP/WRIT2300 is a required course in the Professional Writing Program at York. It was co-designed by a librarian (me) and a Writing Department faculty member (Janet Webber) in 2002-3. Since that time, a librarian has been involved every year in its delivery as either co- or sole director. Annual enrolment has been between 105 and 125 students. Over the life of the Program, more than 1,000 students have taken this course.

**Getting your foot in the door**

In 2002, Jan Rehner contacted me in my capacity as Information Literacy Coordinator for the Scott Reference Department. At that time the Professional Writing curriculum was being developed. Jan was aware of our work in the classroom because her colleagues in the Writing Department (then known as the Centre for Academic Writing) were regular users of our Information Literacy Program. Yet it was chiefly Jan’s foresight that led to this very successful collaboration inasmuch as she insisted a librarian be involved from the outset and on an ongoing basis. When faculty knock on your door and invite you to participate in this kind of thing, say yes.

**Building successful IL-related curriculum**

Successful curriculum integration hinges on showing our faculty colleagues that librarians can bring something of value to table that makes a direct (thought not necessarily measurable) contribution to the Program's overall pedagogical goals. These goals are almost always determined by the discipline itself. For this reason, when I sat down with Janet to design this course, we had to give careful thought not only to developing lectures and assignment that would teach students the practical research skills they needed, but to finding ways persuasively to
frame the fundamental importance of the research process to professional writers in particular. I cannot stress enough how important it is for librarians to keep these kinds of disciplinary distinctions in view when speaking with faculty and when designing curriculum. In my experience, real progress on the curriculum integration front requires that librarians be perceived as genuine insiders who, while bringing something unique to the table, share the disciplinary perspectives and even preoccupations of their faculty colleagues. With that in mind, we aim to introduce students taking AP/WRIT2300 to two key concepts: first, that scholarship is a type of specialized conversation governed by the rules and conventions that affect the research process; and, second, that research and writing are mutually dependent recursive processes that serve to bring the professional writer into dialogue with academic and non-academic resources. Conversation is thus the course's chief organizing metaphor. We encourage students to see the professional writer as a figure occupying a gap between conversations taking place within a specialized community of scholars and a wider community of readers. The ultimate aim of the course then becomes to teach students how to bridge that gap by navigating and translating scholarly discourse into a more accessible product for larger markets of paying readers. In this way, it becomes easier for them to see why the mastery of practical research strategies for using library, online, and other resources is an essential skill for professional writers of all kinds. Structured in some ways like a survey course, we cover the scholarly communication practices of social scientists, humanities scholars, scientists, and business scholars. Assignments based on Wikipedia, literature mapping, and the stock market allow students to become familiar with the tools used by researchers in these disciplines while producing something for the paying market. We also have specialized research lectures on government documents, data, and archives.

Spinoffs from successes (if applicable), e.g. maybe this model was used elsewhere with another program or helped generate other collaborative projects with students or faculty.

The existence of this course has helped to set many of the faculty within the Writing Department more at ease with librarians. As a result, they have been more willing to collaborate with us in the Learning Commons. In my view, the potential for collaboration in this area has only just begun to be tapped.

Psychology/Mark Robertson (former psychology liaison)

Brief description of the curriculum integration in place

I can only describe what was in place when I left the role. There were 2 levels of curriculum integration into the program curriculum: 1) in PSYC 2030 Research Methods, and 2) in PSYC 4170. The 2030 course is a key course for students who are planning on going through with a psyc major. It is a requirement, and it focuses on research methods specifically (though it’s not necessarily a course with a full on research paper as an assignment - the assignment varies depending on the instructor. The 4170 course is a capstone course for majors, and it prepares UGs for writing a major research paper in psych. The course requires you to conceive of an (original) research topic, do a lit search, devise a research methodology, conduct the research and write it up.

The approach at the 2 levels was different. The dept agreed to "mandate" that all sections of 2030 have a library research component (usually in the form of a lecture associated with an assignment). There were about 8 sections back in my day.

There were way too many 4170 sections to be able to do them all (they are much smaller sections than 2030), so it was impossible to expect all sections to have a required IL workshop. Instead I established a series of about 10 workshops which were open to all 4170 students and advertised in all sections. Students could sign up for the workshop. Attendance was capped for each section. I would usually do about 10 of them.
What this 2 stage structure meant was that students were guaranteed a certain baseline at the 2nd year (assuming that's the year they took 2030) and then this level of knowledge could be built on at a later stage.

**Getting your foot in the door**

I just explained to the psychology dept library liaison Chris Green how hit and miss IL instruction was in the psyc program. He was in agreement that we needed a more systematic and graduated approach, I suggested 2030 as a starting point and he agreed to take it to the dept. The dept agreed to require an IL module in each section of the course. It was a matter of looking for an opening and asking the question. I also met at various points with the Undergraduate Program Director to explain the goals of IL integration. One of the challenges in a large program is trying to ensure some consistency amongst instructors teaching different sections of a particular course. In my experience the UPDs were always very sympathetic but weren’t really able to require instructors to design assignments in certain ways or enforce any sort of consistent pedagogical approaches across sections taught by different instructors because this would be perceived as infringing on the freedoms of the instructors.

**Building successful IL-related curriculum**

The next step was 4170, but the approach had to be different since there are so many sections. I think the trick is finding UPDs or liaisons or chairs who are sympathetic and able to make the case to their colleagues.

**Spinoffs from successes (if applicable), e.g. maybe this model was used elsewhere with another program or helped generate other collaborative projects with students or faculty.**

n/a

**Transition Year Program/Norda Majekodunmi & Kent Murnaghan**

**Brief description of the curriculum integration in place**

Kent and I were involved in the first year of the Transition Year Program (September 2010-April 2011). There were successes and challenges. Teaching such a group was challenging ("at-risk" students, some former gang members, high school dropouts etc.) and we had to develop rapport with them over time. Overall we enjoyed the experience, but we were not as actively involved after the first year. I personally think that the workshops were useful to the students, but the satellite research services might have been more useful if it was a more private one-on-one consultation in the library versus us going to the college and offering our services in a room full of students.

We met with the students in August as part of a scavenger hunt type of exercise. They were given various services/destinations on campus to visit. The Learning Commons in Scott Library was one destination. Kent and I gave tours of the Learning Commons to small groups and took photos with the students (as proof). This was helpful to develop rapport with the students in addition to introducing the Learning Commons services.

We taught 3 in-library workshops that incorporated active learning (this was fun and especially rewarding and we had a chance to get students thinking critically about where they get their information). The last 2 workshops were tied to assignments. We also provided satellite research services to students every other week for 2 hours.
Getting your foot in the door

The coordinator approached the library so getting our foot in the door was not difficult. We also had other Learning Commons partners involved individually (Learning Skills and Writing).

Building successful IL-related curriculum

It was crucial for us to plan and work with all the TYP partners (the faculty members, the writing instructor, the learning skills specialists etc.) to develop a successful program. There was more communication at the beginning of planning the program, but we would have benefited more from more communication as the program progressed (although the fall term was especially busy). The library sessions were not attended by a facilitator or a faculty member, therefore attendance was an issue. It would have been useful to have graded quizzes or tests to motivate students to attend the workshops consistently.

The first workshop was not tied to an assignment the students were working on, but was definitely needed to get them to think about information critically without the pressure of an assignment tied to the workshop. I think this approach worked well. We employed a variety of teaching methods in the classes (from discussions to problem-based group work). Students seem to appreciate the mix of lecture, discussion, group work and hands-on activities.

Spinoffs from successes (if applicable), e.g. maybe this model was used elsewhere with another program or helped generate other collaborative projects with students or faculty.

n/a