

INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP GRANTS FOR LIBRARIES PROGRAM:

GRANT APPLICATION

CATEGORY: CONTINUING EDUCATION, CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT, AND TRAINING

Information Literacy for the 21st-Century Learner: Preparing Students to Learn for Life

Submitted by:

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NATIONAL IMPACT

Overview of Need

Community colleges across the nation play a vital educational role in the communities they serve. According to a recent national survey, almost half of the undergraduate students enrolled in public higher education institutions are enrolled in community colleges (American Association of Community Colleges). In Illinois, 60 percent of all undergraduate students enrolled in public colleges and universities are enrolled in community colleges. In 2002, Illinois community colleges enrolled 676,000 students (Illinois Community College Board). From their beginnings in the 1950s to the present, community colleges have embraced and advocated for open access and equity, a commitment to teaching, the value of lifelong learning, workforce development, comprehensive program offerings, and a community-based approach to education.

A significant and growing number of students entering community colleges, however, are arriving underprepared for college-level work. To achieve academic success, students “at-risk” often need educational intervention to address learning disabilities, assistance with English as a second language (ESL), or developmental course work. In Illinois, it is not uncommon in many of the state’s 39 community college districts to find over 50% of students tested for competency in reading, English, and mathematics testing well below college competency levels.¹

¹ Based on COMPASS (Comprehensive Computerized Placement and Diagnostic Assessment System) data from six community colleges; COMPASS or similar assessment tools are administered at all community colleges in Illinois.

Information Literacy

The areas of deficiency highlighted by these findings and statistics correspond to the skills identified as essential to information literacy. In brief, an information literate person is an individual who has the ability to recognize when information is needed and is then able to locate, evaluate, and effectively use the necessary information (American Library Association, *Presidential Committee*). This ability not only enhances the likelihood that a student will succeed in college, it also provides the foundation for continued learning throughout life. As noted in the final report of the ALA Presidential Committee on Information Literacy, “An information literate person is a person who has learned how to learn.” (American Library Association, *Presidential Committee*) The importance of incorporating information literacy instruction into the higher education curriculum has been recognized and promoted by the American Library Association, the Association for Education Communication and Technology, and a growing number of colleges, universities, and higher education accrediting agencies (Grassian and Kaplowitz, 4).

This project proposes the design and development of information literacy resources that address the unique needs of at-risk community college students. Although much of the information literacy literature describes programs and services at the college and university level, discussion of initiatives for at-risk students at community colleges represents only a small part of this literature. Discussions of an approach to information literacy for these students that comprehensively addresses all levels of the Association of College and Research Libraries’ (ACRL) *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*—from basic information retrieval skills to an awareness and understanding of the social and ethical issues surrounding information dissemination—is also lacking. Through the project activities, community college librarians and faculty will collaborate with high school librarians and teachers in six community college districts to create a set of replicable instructional resources that provide a sequenced SET OF learning experiences designed to be introduced at the high school level and further developed at the community college level. The project will also address the assessment of students’ information literacy skills during the critical transition period from high school to college. The goals of this project complement efforts by the Institute for Museum and Library Services to promote initiatives directed toward the needs of the 21st-Century Learner: *Projects that train librarians and library staff to enhance people’s ability to find, evaluate, and use information effectively in the 21st century. This includes projects that foster the abilities of libraries to build community partnerships that will support the development of learning communities and the needs of all learners throughout their lifetime.*

The six community college libraries participating in this project are all members of NILRC: A Consortium of Midwest Community Colleges, Colleges and Universities. NILRC’s mission focuses on enhancing the services provided by post-secondary learning resource centers, libraries, and alternative delivery programs to the institutions and respective communities. NILRC is a not-for-profit educational organization formed thirty years ago to encourage cooperation and collaboration among midwestern community colleges and other institutions of higher education. Each of the participating community colleges works with high schools in their districts, and this project will build on the role of the libraries by creating new opportunities and resources that enhance the instructional programs, at both types of educational institutions.

ADAPTABILITY

The materials developed through this project will be designed to be adaptable for use in a wide range of libraries, colleges, and high schools. Illinois has a unique and diverse mix of large metropolitan areas, mid-sized communities, and rural towns, and the participating institutions represent these various geographic and demographic areas. Participating colleges include: College of DuPage (17,750 FTE students in a western Chicago suburb); John A. Logan College (3,400 FTE students in rural southern Illinois); Lincoln Land Community College (5,000 FTE students in central Illinois serving a small urban community); Moraine Valley Community College (9,600 FTE students in south suburban Chicago); Triton College (8,200 FTE students serving urban suburbs at the western edge of the City of Chicago); and Wilbur Wright College (8,000 FTE students, one of the seven colleges of the City Colleges of Chicago). Project staff will monitor and note the potential influence of different learning environments on the project activities.

DESIGN

Goals and Grant Activities

The project is designed to meet the goals outlined below over a two-year period (September 2003–June 2005). The evaluation section of this application describes the methods and tools that will be used to measure the expected results and changes.

A project advisory council of five members will be formed to observe, monitor, provide feedback, and recommend future directions for development and use of the instructional resources. Individuals invited to be on the advisory council will include national leaders in the information literacy movement: distinguished library media specialists, library school faculty, and academic librarians from across the United States.

Goal 1: Assess the information literacy needs of at-risk community college students.

- Analysis of Assessment Data: Analyze and compare admissions and entrance assessment data from the six participating community colleges to determine areas of skill deficiency in relation to the ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*. The finding will also be compared to the American Association of School Librarians' *Information Power* standards to determine differences in students' levels of competency in relation to the two information literacy standards for competency. (September–December 2003)
- Information Literacy Skills Assessment Instrument: Develop an assessment instrument to measure the information literacy skills of at-risk community college students. The Project Manager will work with the instructional design and assessment office at Moraine Valley Community College to develop, test, and validate an instrument designed to assess skills at all levels of the ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*. (January–June 2004)
- Assess Baseline Information Literacy Skills: Administer the information literacy skills assessment instrument in each of the six community college districts to two random groups of

fifteen students each: 1) fifteen at-risk students at the senior grade level of high school who have expressed an interest in enrolling in college after high school graduation and 2) fifteen at-risk students who have completed at least twelve credit hours of coursework at the community college. This assessment data will assist in the design and development of the project's information literacy materials, as well as serve as a baseline for analyzing and evaluating the project's results. (July–August 2004)

Goal 2: Develop and utilize a replicable set of information literacy instructional resources designed to address the unique needs of at-risk community college students.

- Design of Information Literacy Resources: Design and use information literacy instructional resources in high school and college instructional programs and activities that target at-risk students. Following the analysis and comparison of assessment data (Goal 1), a project team from each of the participating community colleges will meet in a series of three full-day sessions to plan a framework for the instructional approaches and strategies that will be incorporated into the design of the resources. Each session will focus on a topic central to the planning and assessing of effective instructional resources as follows: Session 1 - information literacy, Session 2 - instructional design, and Session 3 - assessment. Recognized experts will facilitate the planning sessions. Patricia Breivik, Director of the National Forum for Information Literacy, has been asked to serve as Content Specialist for the initial session. Each project team will consist of at least one community college librarian, one community college faculty member, one high school librarian, and one high school teacher.

The format and content of the instructional resources developed by each community college project team may vary, depending on the needs and curriculum unique to each institutional setting. One project team, for example, may design a 1-credit information literacy course for at-risk community college students, and another project team might develop an online information literacy tutorial for ESL high school and community college students. The design, development and use of the resources, however, will share the following common elements:

Collaborative: The project teams will work collaboratively with their college librarians and faculty, high school librarians, and appropriate high school teachers to develop the instructional resources.

Sequenced: The instructional resources will be designed as a sequenced set of learning experiences that build on skills introduced in high school and further developed during a student's first term in the community college.

Competency-based: The design of the instructional resources will use the five standards, twenty-two performance indicators, and related outcomes described in the *ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*.

- Use of Information Literacy Resources: The information literacy resources will be incorporated into instructional programs for at-risk students at the high school and college levels. In each of the six community college districts, fifteen students at the high school level and fifteen students at the community college level who are participating in the information literacy learning activities will be randomly selected to assess the effectiveness of the instructional resources. Project staff will monitor the impact of the resources on student learning during this phase of

the project by conducting interviews with students, librarians, teachers, and faculty, and through assessment to evaluate levels of academic confidence. (Resource development/design: August–December 2004; Implementation: December 2004–May 2005)

Goal 3: Create a repository of professional development and learning resources related to information literacy skill development for at-risk community college students.

- National Teleconference: Conduct a national teleconference on information literacy skill development at the community college level. The College of DuPage, an educational institution that has produced over 100 national teleconferences on library issues, will provide planning assistance and broadcast facilities for a two-hour, interactive national teleconference that addresses the unique needs of community college students in relation to information literacy. Activities and findings from the project will be discussed during the teleconference, and audience participants will have an opportunity to share their experiences and materials. The teleconference will be promoted to community college and high school librarians, faculty, teachers, and academic staff. The teleconference will be recorded for videotape distribution and web-based videostreaming. (June 2005)
- Institute on Information Literacy Collaboration: Plan an institute in conjunction with Moraine Valley Community College's (MVCC) annual information literacy summit. The project team will work with MVCC library staff to design an institute that focuses on community college collaboration with high schools to promote information literacy. (April 2005)
- Web-Based Repository of Instructional Resources: Design and develop a web-based repository of information literacy resources that address the needs of community college students. Instructional materials and instructor's guides resulting from the project will be included and additional materials identified during the project will be added (e.g., resources submitted prior to and following the teleconference, institute materials, articles, examples of best practices, etc.). The project staff will remain in close contact with the IMLS-funded Syracuse University project, "S.O.S. for Information Literacy." Initial discussions with the S.O.S. project staff indicate the potential of contributing material from the this project to the S.O.S. portal of information literacy resources. The resources from this project will provide a unique contribution, because they address the needs of community college students rather than K-12 students, which has been the central focus of the S.O.S. materials to date. (July 2004–July 2005)

MANAGEMENT PLAN

NILRC is located in Sugar Grove, Illinois, and has an annual budget of nearly one million dollars. Its membership is comprised of fifty-four community colleges, colleges, and universities located throughout the Midwest. NILRC's funding derives from a combination of membership dues, surcharge fees on group purchases, and investment income. NILRC, a 501 c3 not-for-profit educational organization, is one of the oldest community college learning resources cooperatives in the nation. Although it began in 1973 as a grass roots organization to meet the basic needs of developing learning resources centers at community colleges, it has become a leader in the development and use of a variety of instructional resources and technologies. It was one of the first organizations to foster satellite teleconferencing and satellite delivery of video resource materials. In the early 1980s it developed a computerized online circulation control and records management system. The system,

known as the Comprehensive Automated Learning Resources System (CALS), was the forerunner of today's commercial online circulation systems and OPACS.

The cooperative is governed by a board of directors representing each member institution. Board members have a variety of backgrounds and responsibilities on their campuses, ranging from LRC deans to directors of educational technologies. This diversity enhances the organization's effectiveness, broadens the scope of its projects, and facilitates the exchange of ideas and resources.

NILRC has a strong managerial infrastructure, which has supported past grants. Over the years, NILRC has applied for and received funding from both federal and state grant programs for a variety of projects that were conducted for the benefit of its diverse membership. Since its founding, NILRC members have benefited from several state grants (Illinois Board of Higher Education, Illinois Community College Board, and the Illinois State Library (LSTA)) on networking, educational technology, staff development, and information infrastructure, totaling over three million dollars. The NILRC Business Office is well prepared to handle all issues related to the budget in a fiscally sound and responsible manner.

John W. Berry, NILRC's Executive Director, will be the project director responsible for the overall implementation of this project. A project manager will be responsible for working closely with staff and faculty of the six community college libraries and their district high school counterparts to ensure a smooth workflow throughout the project's two-year implementation. Project staff will monitor and note the potential influence of different learning environments on the project activities.

NILRC's proven track record and history of facilitating and fostering cooperation among its member institutions is one of its greatest strengths, and will help to ensure the success of this project. We have selected six Illinois community colleges to work on this project. Participating colleges include College of DuPage, John A. Logan College, Lincoln Land Community College, Moraine Valley Community College, Triton College, and Wilbur Wright College.

BUDGET

The budget for the project is for a two-year period. The rationale for each budget item is included in the budget notes. If the entire amount of funding requested is not available, the project could be scaled back, and the number of institutions and students participating could be reduced. The best scenario would be to conduct this project with all six participating institutions, thus maximizing the ability of the project to address the needs of a diverse range of both institutional types and locations. The evaluation of the success of this project among this group would provide valuable information on the sustainability of this project beyond the scope of this grant.

PERSONNEL

Project Director: John W. Berry has been NILRC Executive Director since 1996. He has worked as an academic librarian since 1972 and served as American Library Association President in 2001–02. He served nine years on the ALA Council and three on its Executive Board.

Business Manager: Lisa A. Sikora, NILRC Executive Office Business Manager since 1997, is well experienced in grant fiscal management and has administered LSTA and other state grants totaling \$700,000 during her tenure.

Half-time Project Manager at \$25,000 per year

PROJECT EVALUATION

To measure the impact of the project, an outcome-based approach to evaluation will be used. The evaluation activities will focus on documenting changes that occurred as a result of the project, particularly the influence of the project on the development of information literacy competencies in at-risk community college students. As described below, information will be collected throughout the two-year project period about the impact of the project in four key areas: student skills and competencies, information literacy resources, program collaboration, and the web-based repository.

A. Student Skills and Competencies

<i>Purpose:</i>	180 at-risk students will develop information literacy skills and competencies as a result of participating in project activities (15 students at each of the 6 participating high schools and 15 students at each of the 6 participating community colleges)
<i>Activity:</i>	180 students participate in project activities and utilize the project's information literacy resources at the high school and college levels over a 7-month period
<i>Intended Outcome:</i>	At-risk students increase their academic achievement and success in high school and community college coursework
<i>Indicators:</i>	Scores on the information literacy assessment instrument administered at the start and after completion of the project activities will reflect an improvement; Students report more academic confidence in interviews conducted at the conclusion of the project
<i>Data Source:</i>	Information literacy assessment instrument administered at the start and conclusion of the project activities; Student interviews conducted at the start and at the conclusion of the project that use Constance Mellon's library anxiety criteria to evaluate academic confidence; Grades on high school and community college coursework
<i>Target for Change:</i>	85% of the students' scores on the information literacy assessment tools document increased levels of information literacy competency in comparison to the initial baseline scores; 85% of students increase their levels of academic confidence from the start to the conclusion of their participation in the information literacy activities

B. Information Literacy Resources

<i>Purpose:</i>	Project teams design and utilize a set of information literacy resources that address the needs of at-risk community college students
<i>Activity:</i>	Three one-day planning sessions for the six project teams; Development of a set of information literacy resources by each team to be used in high school and community college programs; Use of the resources in high school instructional programs; Use of the resources at each of the community colleges
<i>Intended Outcome:</i>	The information literacy resources meet the intended student outcomes and program collaboration goals

<i>Indicators:</i>	Consistent and high levels of use by librarians, teachers, faculty, and students at the participating institutions; Advisory Council reports high potential usability of the resources as a model for other community college-high school partnerships; Resources are used by the broader library, community college, and high school communities
<i>Data Source:</i>	Feedback and evaluations provided by students, librarians, teachers, faculty, and Advisory Council members
<i>Target for Change:</i>	All of the sets of information literacy resources are developed and successfully utilized in the project activities; No significant changes to the resources are recommended by the project participants or Advisory Council members

C. Program Collaboration

<i>Purpose:</i>	Six project teams consisting of high school librarians, high school teachers, community college librarians, and community college faculty collaborate to design and develop information literacy resources
<i>Activity:</i>	Six project teams participate in a three one-day planning sessions; Project teams develop and use resources
<i>Intended Outcome:</i>	A collaborative approach results in the development and use of information literacy resources in a sequenced set of learning experiences for at-risk students at the high school and community college levels
<i>Indicators:</i>	Consistent participation by project team members throughout the project; Project teams members report and describe benefits of collaboration at the conclusion of the project; Resources are developed by each of the project teams; Resources are successfully utilized in the high schools and the community colleges
<i>Data Source:</i>	Interviews with project team members conducted at the conclusion of the project; Entries into project journals maintained by each project team member
<i>Target for Change:</i>	90% of the project team members report satisfaction with the collaborative approach of the project

D. Web-Based Repository

<i>Purpose:</i>	A web-based repository of professional development and learning resources related to information literacy skill development for at-risk community college students is developed to support community college and high school information literacy initiatives
<i>Activity:</i>	Collect instructional and informational resources about information literacy skill development of at-risk community college students and make the materials available on a project website
<i>Intended Outcome:</i>	The resources are used effectively by librarians, teachers, and faculty in high school and community college instructional programs for at-risk students
<i>Indicators:</i>	Individuals who use the resources report that the materials and information support and enhance their instructional efforts
<i>Data Source:</i>	Website “hits”; results from web surveys; interviews with librarians and

	instructors who use the resources
<i>Target for Change:</i>	75% of the resource users are able to use the materials and report satisfaction with them.

DISSEMINATION

The results of the project and the information literacy resources will be disseminated in multiple ways. Invitations to participate in the national teleconference and information literacy summit will be widely publicized in the professional literature. The web-based repository of resources will also be promoted in professional sources, including journals, newsletters, at conferences and workshops, and through electronic discussion lists. Project participants will deliver presentations at state and regional conference such as the Illinois Library Association Conference, the Illinois School Library Media Association Conference, American Library Association Annual conference programs by the Community and Junior College Libraries Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries, as well as publish articles in professional journals.

SUSTAINABILITY

The web-based repository of information literacy resources developed during this project will serve as a replicable model for information professionals to use in high schools, community colleges, and other institutions of higher education to address student needs nationwide.

Initial discussions with Syracuse University’s “S.O.S. for Information Literacy” project staff indicate considerable synergy and the potential of contributing material from this project to the S.O.S. portal of information literacy resources. The resources from this project will provide a unique contribution, because they address the needs of community college students rather than K-12 students, which has been the central focus of the S.O.S. materials to date.

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