Fall 2011 FTLC Conference

Meat and/or Potatoes: Information Literacy Instruction à la Carte

Introduction

One of the skills goals of the GVSU General Education Program is "to locate, evaluate, and use information effectively." That is commonly known as information literacy. There are many paths to information literacy, and students come into Writing 150 at differing levels of information literacy. For years the Library has partnered with Writing 150 instructors in teaching information literacy skills to Writing 150 students in order to enhance their research skills and help them create better research papers. One of the tools GVSU librarians developed for teaching information literacy helps with that. Our Information Literacy Core Competencies (ILCCs, for short) were developed to help all faculty to develop information literacy skills in their students – to take them where they are, wherever that may be, and guide them toward a higher skill level.

After thoroughly studying and researching information literacy, the librarians who devised the ILCCs divided them into 6 overall skills goals with 3 sets of objectives per goal: 1 set for General Education and Basic Skills Courses, 1 for Majors, and 1 for Graduate Courses. Though the goals have a numerical order, they do not need to be taught sequentially. "**The order in which information literacy skills are learned is dependent on one's specific information needs and existing skills**." As the theme of this conference states, there is a great deal of variation among students in terms of age, background, prior experiences, knowledge, and other factors; and this is very clear when it comes to information literacy skills in Writing 150.

That's why when I partnered with Nicholas Johnson to teach information literacy skills to his Writing 150 classes, I asked him to choose the ILCC goals and objectives that would best suit the needs of his classes. After careful deliberation, he chose to have me come to his classes at 3 different times in the semester to teach 3 different skills goals in approximately 25-minute sessions. The first time I came into his classes about 5 weeks into the semester to teach the first goal he chose:

Locate and Gather Information
General Education and Basic Skills Courses

- Identify sources of information inside and outside of the library.
- Develop awareness of information lifecycle and ability to determine which types of information are appropriate for topic.

About 3 weeks later, I came in to teach the second goal he chose:

Manage Information and Communicate Knowledge
Major Program

- Use a citation management system (e.g., RefWorks).

2 weeks after that I taught the third goal:

Evaluate Sources

General Education and Basic Skills Courses

- Know the difference between scholarly and popular sources.