

## An Information Literacy Partnership

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To be prepared for a future characterized by change, students must learn to think rationally and creatively, solve problems, manage and retrieve information, and communicate effectively. Mastering information problem solving skills will prepare students for an information-based society and a technology-rich workplace. Information literacy encompasses the full range of abilities that students need to interact effectively with information and to construct meaningful knowledge. These abilities include:

- analyzing complex and conflicting presentations of information;
- appreciating diverse perspectives offered by individual viewpoints, academic disciplines, and various cultures;
- using information competently in critical thinking, decision making, and problem solving;
- producing new information and creating products and presentations that communicate ideas efficiently and effectively; and
- developing into lifelong learners who can assimilate varying viewpoints, accommodate change, and contribute to the well-being of the community.

Long after they leave our classrooms students will be making decisions using information. Indeed, businesses tell us they want workers who know how to manage information. School research projects can be training grounds for the development of these essential competencies. When teachers work in collaborative ways with library information specialists, articulating goals from high school to college,

teaching and learning can change. Together they can develop questions that require students to think, analyze, compare, and communicate.

With this in mind, Fred Page, science teacher, joined Paul Bielich, science library media specialist, in a pilot partnership between Detroit's Northwestern High School and the David Adamany Undergraduate Library at Wayne State University to develop student information literacy in high school. The university library faculty was helpful in assisting the pilot schools with organization, planning, and implementing the staff in-services.

Teachers who are unaware of available resources are unsure of how to use technology to access information. Further, they may lack experience in or the opportunity to plan research with their colleagues. Two half-day workshops led by both Page and Bielich involved the faculty of the science department. Activities included becoming familiar with the "search" in research, exploring Northwestern's electronic and print resources, and designing applications that integrated information literacy into their science curriculum. Allowing time to explore both print and electronic resources available in the science library was essential. Toward the end of the year, the staff of the undergraduate library offered a workshop in developing Microsoft PowerPoint presentations.

Initially teachers were skeptical. When they realized that information literacy was part of national and state standards for each curriculum area, they became more involved. They learned the value of emphasizing synthesis and evaluation in research as they integrated infor-

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mation literacy into their existing curriculum. When the workshops ended they were eager to continue improving research assignments for their classes.

Page and Bielich introduced the Big6 Skills to the students of Page's advanced astronomy class. Just as their teachers had done, the stu-

dents spent several days in the school's science library exploring both electronic and print resources. Amazed at the rich information available in various electronic periodical databases, they began to discern the value of authoritative databases over Internet resources. Students shared their research on the planets in

our solar system with their class by creating Microsoft PowerPoint presentations. Pilot partnerships like this, in which active learners create their own knowledge from a variety of resources, can provide a solid foundation of information literacy skills that can be used throughout high school and college. ●

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