

SCIL Works 2008 Presentation

Using the Scaffolding Method to Build an Information Literacy Program

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Implementing a successful and fully comprehensive campus-wide information literacy (IL) program on a small budget demands stakeholder buy-in and support from faculty, students, librarians, and top administrators. Programs must have a method to evaluate and assess library instruction content and student learning outcomes to illuminate program effectiveness. The scaffolding method of instruction provides a framework to build a multi-level information literacy program that succeeds in bringing together the goals of librarians and faculty to increase student academic productivity.

Chapman University's Leatherby Libraries launched an ambitious IL program with over 900 incoming freshmen in 38 classes, supported by two instruction librarians interacting with 32 professors. Program flexibility was the challenge to encourage support from faculty, forming a new relationship with librarians to increase IL skills. This critical consideration resulted in selecting a scaffolding instructional strategy¹, which offers a flexible and tiered teaching method to support IL learning outcomes and student self-directed opportunities to increase retention.

The program has 3 key components: (1) an online instrument, tying IL skills to a summer book all incoming freshman were reading; (2) an in-person library instruction session in the fall with an option of standardized instruction or a collaborative co-design/co-teach session between librarians and faculty; and (3) an IL assessment tool [SAILS] that was piloted with 12 sections. In addition, all classes participated in program surveys and evaluations.

The online instrument was successful with students completing research assignments tied to the summer book and a post-test of IL skills. The scaffolding approach allowed students to work through modules on selecting, searching, and evaluating information. The in-person session also incorporated a scaffolding approach to searching one multi-disciplinary database. The scaffold disappears and students direct their own search strategies to apply to course-specific outcomes. Student and faculty evaluations were favorable, confirming the library sessions were beneficial and increased research skills.

If accepted for SCIL Works, our presentation will include: (1) how to implement scaffolding in IL programs; (2) strategies for gaining faculty support; (3) an overview of our IL program; and (4) results of the post-tests and program evaluations.

¹Inspirational article: Bordonaro, K., & Richardson, G. (2004). Scaffolding and reflection in course-integrated library instruction. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, 30(5), 391-401.