

## GROWING AN INFORMATION LITERACY PROGRAM

—MICHELLE MILLET, INFORMATION LITERACY COORDINATOR

The fall 2005 semester marks the 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of the Information Commons at Coates Library, as well as my own third year at Trinity. When I arrived here in 2003, I planned to create a vibrant instruction and information literacy program. I am pleased to report that many of you are now integrating information literacy and research strategies into your courses. Many more faculty are including library instruction sessions in their syllabi. In 2004-05, the librarians at Trinity taught 185 instruction sessions, an increase of 77.9% over 2003-04. Our one-on-one research consultations totaled 237 sessions and were also a big success. The tireless effort of liaison librarians is the primary reason for these jumps in our numbers, and with the assistance of the teaching faculty we will keep this momentum.

For 2005-06, librarians will be working with several departments to identify specific courses within the curriculum that lend themselves to face-to-face library instruction. Our aim is to identify course sequences that could enable students to experience increasingly sophisticated research techniques and sources as they progress through their degree programs. By targeting students at different levels and majors, we believe that students will be better able to identify and use the research tools they need to thrive in their disciplines.

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This summer we added new information literacy resources to the library website. We have constructed a gateway that will take you to descriptions of library instruction and information literacy services, resources, and request forms—all in one

place. To view this site, you can choose the "Library Instruction & Information Literacy" link on the library's website or go directly to <http://lib.trinity.edu/research/infolit/teachingfac.shtml>.



The new semester is a good time to highlight the services we offer as components in the library's instruction initiative:

- Course-related library instruction
- Library-related assignments
- Research guides, bibliographies, or class-specific web pages
- Research appointments for students
- Department-specific workshops for resources

We realize that class time is very valuable. If you think your class would benefit from a library and information literacy segment but you're not sure if you have the time, we'd be happy to work on alternate strategies. We can work with teaching faculty to create library assignments that include information literacy components or create course-specific websites that aim to instruct as well as inform. We're also available for research appointments with students who may need individual assistance. Aside from face-to-face instruction, there are a number of ways to initiate successful librarian/faculty partnerships.

I have heard many of you express con-

cern about student papers and bibliographies containing only websites. We understand your frustration and can help! If this is a consistent issue in your courses, we can assist in developing assignments that puts the student in the library to utilize and evaluate different types of resources. We often think that students are "Internet savvy," when in reality they are "computer savvy"—and there's a difference.

The computer savvy individual can manipulate a search engine just as easily as they find and download music files, but they do not understand the cycle of scholarly publishing, or the difference between junk web sources and peer-reviewed journal content. We believe a quality undergraduate education includes the kind of information literacy skills training that will benefit them in their college years, and following. Together we can be certain that students receive every instructional opportunity they require.

We also hope to keep you informed about the resources the library has to offer. We will be continuing our series of "Focus on Faculty" workshops, including topics such as using the Early English Books Online database, more effective searching with Google, using ArtStor, and keeping up with

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Tables of Contents and search alerting services. Please watch for e-mail notices and flyers publicizing these sessions.

I believe that this year will be more successful than the last, and I encourage you to take advantage of the instruction services offered at the Coates Library. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or your library liaison.

## BOOKS AND OUR DELICATE HISTORICAL MOMENT

—NINA EKSTEIN

The Library Activities Committee has focused much of its energy in the last two years on the problems raised by serials: rampantly increasing costs, decreasing level of use, alternate delivery systems for articles. These are serious problems that require ongoing efforts to arrive at some workable solutions. But serials are not the only library resource threatened by changes beyond our control. New knowledge is disseminated not only in journals, but books also play a crucial role in most disciplines as well.

Do we, as a faculty, believe that library textual resources (i.e., books) still have a vital role to play in an undergraduate education? Do we expect students to use books in the library collection for research papers? Are we satisfied when students turn in papers that contain nothing but references to web sites? Do we want our students to graduate having had the experience of consulting library books and coming across related material a few books further down on the shelf?

This is a delicate historical moment when libraries are renegotiating their position within the university. We as faculty need to be part of that ongoing discussion. No doubt, we do not all agree about the degree of importance of textual materials to our disciplines and our courses. The relative importance of textual (print) materials as opposed to materials available on-line varies enormously from one field to the next.

Nonetheless, as educators in a liberal arts institution, we must recognize that books remain valuable resources and that

students need to experience a wide range of formats as sources of information.

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Books offer extended lines of argument that are not conducive to being consumed on-line and that do not fit within the limits of a journal article. They also offer a relatively high degree of assurance that their content has been extensively evaluated before reaching publication. Their reliability as factual documents is typically better than on-line resources that may be unverified or unsigned.

Statistics indicate that our students are using library books less and less frequently. According to the Trinity library's records, student circulation of books has dropped from 73,159 transactions in 1994-95 to 39,373 in 2004-05. The needs and habits of students doing research have changed along with the resources they most commonly employ. The faculty are far from powerless to influence this trend. All we need to do in order to impress upon students the value of textual materials for research is to design assignments that require that they consult

such materials. Through such requirements we as faculty members can provide greater breadth and balance in our students' experience of academic research.

The Trinity librarians are eager to help you design such assignments. Each of our liaison librarians is familiar with the resources of the library in their assigned fields. Furthermore, Michelle Millet's position is specifically geared to instructional development. My own experience has been very positive in this regard and I now include a library research project in all of my courses dealing with literature or cinema.

While the Trinity Library's budget has been growing at a reasonable pace, serious pressure is being placed on it by the demands for technology and associated resources as well as the skyrocketing cost of journals. In light of reduced circulation numbers, books are vulnerable to budgetary threats. If our students do not make use of the library's book collection, funds for its continuing growth and development will gradually dry up.

Don't we owe it to our students to expose them to the rich possibilities of an earlier, rapidly disappearing meaning of the word "browse?"

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