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Information Literacy Beyond the Library: Organizations to Watch

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Column: "Information Literacy Beyond the Library"

Title: Organizations to Watch

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The need for an information literate society is increasingly apparent to educators, employers, policy makers, and other leaders. Colleges and undergraduate libraries are well-positioned to collaborate with a variety of constituencies on addressing this need. Academic librarians can benefit from an awareness of reports, conferences, and newsletters of organizations outside of libraries that recognize the importance of effectively finding, using, and communicating information. Past columns in this journal described the information literacy interests of the National Forum on Information Literacy (Weiner & Jackman 2010); Cable in the Classroom (Gallagher & Stewart 2011); and CVE, Inc. (Jones, Regan, and Mitra in press). This column describes four other organizations. By examining the web sites and subscribing to the online updates for each, librarians can have current information about topics that relate to information literacy and incorporate it into their libraries' information literacy plans.

Achieve (<http://achieve.org>).

“Created in 1996 by the nation’s governors and corporate leaders, Achieve is an independent, bipartisan, non-profit education reform organization based in Washington, D.C. that helps states raise academic standards and graduation requirements, improve assessments and strengthen accountability” (Achieve 2011). Through a state-led collaborative process, Achieve developed standards for English Language Arts and Mathematics in 2010. There are many resources on the organization’s web site for understanding the “common core standards” for these two subject areas and implementing them. The section, Postsecondary Connection, (2011) contains resources that college faculty and administrators can use to advocate for the common core standards to influence college student success.

The existing common core standards for English Language Arts include competencies related to information literacy. Table 1 shows those common core standards (Achieving the common core 2011) and the information literacy competency to which they relate (American Association of School Librarians and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology 1998).

Table 1. Common Core Standards Related to Information Literacy Standards.

Common Core Standard	Corresponding Information Literacy Standard
<p>“The ability to write logical arguments based on substantive claims, sound reasoning, and relevant evidence”</p>	<p>S1 “The student who is information literate accesses information efficiently and effectively”</p> <p>S2 “The student who is information literate evaluates information critically and competently”</p> <p>S3 “The student who is information literate uses information accurately and creatively”</p>
<p>The ability “to gain, evaluate, and present increasingly-complex information, ideas, and evidence through listening and speaking as well as through a wide range of media”</p>	<p>S1 “The student who is information literate accesses information efficiently and effectively”</p> <p>S3 “The student who is information literate uses information accurately and creatively”</p>
<p>“purposeful speaking and listening in various academic settings...Formal presentations are one important way such communication occurs, but so are the more informal discussions that take place as students collaborate to answer questions, build understanding, and solve problems”</p>	<p>S3 “The student who is information literate uses information accurately and creatively”</p> <p>S9 “The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and participates effectively in groups to pursue and generate information”</p>

<p>“Skills related to media and technology (both critical analysis and production of media)”</p>	<p>S2 “The student who is information literate evaluates information critically and competently”</p>
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Students beginning college currently have a varying range of exposure to information literacy concepts in elementary and high school. As states adopt the common core standards, academic librarians will be able to make assumptions about the information literacy competencies that first-year students will have. They can then structure what they teach in their information literacy programs to build on what the students already know.

Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) (<http://www.cic.edu/>).

“Founded in 1956, the Council of Independent Colleges is an association of independent colleges and universities working together to:

- support college and university leadership,
- advance institutional excellence, and
- enhance private higher education's contributions to society”

CIC has more than 600 members and provides “services to campus leaders as well as seminars, workshops, and programs that assist institutions in improving educational programs, administrative and financial performance, and institutional visibility” (Council of Independent Colleges 2011). The President of the CIC, Richard Ekman, is an advocate for information literacy. The CIC endorsed ACRL’s “Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (Hardesty and Ekman 2004).

The organization offers the unique workshop series, “Information Fluency in the Disciplines” (Council of Independent Colleges 2011a). The Association of College and Research Libraries and the

Council on Library and Information Resources are co-sponsors. The Appalachian College Association and the United Negro College Fund endorsed the workshops. The purpose of the workshops is to assist colleges with the progression from information literacy in general education to information fluency in humanities majors (Council of Independent Colleges 2011). Topics covered during the workshops are:

- Faculty-librarian collaboration
- The role of chief academic officers
- New, online, and traditional resources
- Program evaluation
- Space and budgets
- Implementation of change

The workshops, “Transformation of the College Library,” were the predecessors of this series (Bennett 2007; Hardesty and Ekman 2004). The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation provides funding for the workshops. The web site includes resources from some of previous workshops which are relevant for all academic libraries.

National Association for Media Literacy Education (NAMLE) (<http://namle.net/>)

Originating in 1997, the National Association for Media Literacy Education is a national membership organization dedicated to advancing the field of media literacy education in the United States. It was known by two other names previously: the Alliance for a Media Literate America; and the Partnership for Media Education (National Association for Media Literacy Education 2011).

NAMLE defines media literacy as “the ability to encode and decode the symbols transmitted via media and the ability to synthesize, analyze and produce mediated messages...Media literacy education is the educational field dedicated to teaching the skills associated with media literacy” (National Association for Media Literacy Education 2011a). The organization further states that “the ability to

ACCESS, ANALYZE, EVALUATE, and COMMUNICATE information in a variety of forms is interdisciplinary by nature...To become a successful student, responsible citizen, productive worker, or competent and conscientious consumer, individuals need to develop expertise with the increasingly sophisticated information and entertainment media that address us on a multi-sensory level, affecting the way we think, feel, and behave” (National Association for Media Literacy Education 2011a). The founding president described roles for library media professionals related to media literacy (Rogow 2011).

NAMLE began publishing the open access journal, *Journal of Media Literacy Education* (<http://jmle.org/index.php/JMLE>), in 2009. Although classroom teachers are the intended audience for its publication, *Core principles of media literacy education In the United States* (National Association for Media Literacy Education 2007), information literacy librarians may benefit from the definition of the principles, implications for practice, and the list of questions that can be used to evaluate media messages. The organization holds a conference and gives media and research awards.

NAMLE is developing an excellent foundation for media literacy education during elementary and secondary school. College faculty, librarians, instructional designers and others may benefit from an awareness of the work that is preparing students for college.

National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience & Students in Transition

(<http://www.sc.edu/fye/>)

The National Resource Center for The First-Year Experience and Students in Transition originated in 1982. Its mission is “to support and advance efforts to improve student learning and transitions into and through higher education” (National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience). The Center organizes conferences and offers workshops; publishes a peer-reviewed journal, books and a newsletter; conducts research; and supports discussion lists for communication.

The Associate Vice President and Executive Director of the Center, Stuart Hunter, wrote that “student learning and success is a campus-wide responsibility” (2006). Alexander and Gardner recommended that institutions “consider all components of the first year and the way those components interact, for better or worse, to affect the learning and retention of beginning college students” (Alexander and Gardner, 2009). College libraries commonly participate in orienting new students by providing library tours or a basic level of Information literacy training. The resources provided through the National Center can enlighten academic librarians about different aspects of the first-year experience. This may inspire new ways to participate more fully in helping students integrate academically into their institutions.

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