Conversations with Faculty by Robin Kear, @rkear, rlk25@pitt.edu
Methods for talking and listening to faculty and demonstrating to them the importance of library instruction and information literacy. Conversation starters and strategies for instruction that pique faculty interest.

Realities and Perceptions
- Watch for Stereotypes
    - Faculty can be hard to reach
        - Time constraints, stress at the beginning and end of the semester, others
    - Faculty are reluctant to give up a class session
        - Some may never allow a librarian into their classroom for various reasons
    - Faculty may equate information literacy with what they see or experience as remedial library instruction
        - Librarians can only provide a limited introduction to IL in the one-shot 50 minute session
    - Subordinate role of librarians within institutional hierarchy, even those librarians with faculty status
- Terminology Can be Different
    - Different terminology for similar concepts exists between faculty and librarians
    - Faculty may equate information literacy with technological or digital literacy
- Watch for Assumptions about Students
    - Faculty may believe students are already information literate or can pick it up on their own
    - Faculty may want students to flail about in the information realm or believe that disciplinary expertise should precede any practice of research
    - How can students judge sources before becoming knowledgeable in their discipline?
- Experiences Vary
    - Ambiguous role of librarians in teaching information literacy
    - Different librarians explain things differently
    - Varies across institutions

Interaction: What other realities and perceptions do you face?

Defining Information Literacy
- The Professional Use of Information Literacy is Changing
    - There is a new ACRL definition and framework for thinking about the concepts.
      http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework
        - Information literacy is the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.
- Understand the Framework Concepts
    - These are the foundational ideas in our field. Beginners can understand these at a rudimentary level but then librarians need to deepen the understanding of students.

Librarians can adapt these to their institutional needs. We can use each concept's knowledge practices (reflect ability) and dispositions (reflect affective learning) to create instruction sessions, tutorials, and other learning objects.

- Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
- Information Creation as a Process
- Information Has Value
- Research as Inquiry
- Scholarship as Conversation
- Searching as Strategic Exploration

- Be Prepared to Discuss Them.
  - The new framework helps to put this in broader educational thinking for your faculty. It has a collaborative and holistic feel. It provides a great stage for conversations and can help structure the learning progression of students.

Interaction: How many of you are using the new framework? If so, how?

Conversation Starters and Answering Questions

- Conversation Starters
  - What do they wish their students did better? With papers, projects, or other student work.
    - Do they always have to verify quality sources?
    - Do the students give up on searching?
    - Do students understand where the information is coming from?
  - What question(s) do they receive every semester or year regarding their research projects?
    - Are they always explaining citations?
  - What new directions are they trying to take their students?
  - What is their own research?
- Answering Questions
  - Speak another language: Try using one of these terms for information literacy: critical thinking (for a definition see the *International Encyclopedia of Education*, Robert Ennis' concept of critical thinking), research skills, research fluency, or research process.
    - Information terms can also be used: information competency, information analysis, etc.
    - Faculty may have a different understanding of the word research as original scholarship. What we may mean as research, they may think of as the literature review.
    - Use a discipline specific statement of critical thinking skills.
  - Explain how the framework concepts relate to their courses and research assignments.
  - Relate your work to higher institutional goals, an accreditation framework, a provost's expected student outcomes, or another educational or institutional requirement.
  - These conversations can lead to deeper collaboration. One-shots can be an entry to the framework concept and open up further conversations for application during the

course. This can lead to working with faculty to create new kinds of assignments using the framework.

Interaction: What are some questions that you ask of faculty?

Present a Solution or Strategy!
- There is no uniform way to do this. The approach depends on the faculty member, your rapport, and your network. It also depends on the discipline, the class level, undergraduate vs. graduate and the assignment.
- State that a critical thinker needs to: know how information is created and valued, define the authority of the information, recognize that searching is nonlinear, understand scholarly conversation, and know that research builds on questions.
  - Independently of or dependent on the student's level of knowledge of the discipline (generic or subject specific)
- Emphasize that you can complement the class curriculum or the research assignment.
  - You can help students learn to understand information, systematically approach new topics and/or show the students discipline-specific tools and explain how they are constructed.
- Clearly communicate what you can cover for their class and any options for delivery or method.
  - Make faculty aware that all framework concepts cannot be covered in one session and talk about ways to further partner.
  - Offer to be involved in their online course.
  - Keep yourself up-to-date with technology and its pedagogical use(s) and be prepared to implement it. Recognize when which tool will work best.
- Partner with your other library departments to deliver content.
  - Use primary documents from your special collections or archives.
  - Introduce digital scholarship tools.
- Figure out ways to save him or her time and show you can deliver.
- Offer to follow-up and be involved in the ground floor of new courses or partnerships.
- Explain discipline specific rubrics for information concepts for systematic review of understanding and application.
- If the opportunity arises, create an information literacy standalone credit tied to a discipline.

Interaction: What strategies do you use that I haven't mentioned?

Develop Ongoing Relationships
- Collaboration is best done on a personal level. Continuously build a relationship with the constituency you seek and eventually, they will seek you out. Become an interested colleague, not an outside entity.
- Build your personal network of faculty. This can take years to develop.
  - Volunteer for departmental ad hoc committees.
  - Get elected to senate or departmental faculty committees.
  - Attend committee meetings, departmental and university meetings, faculty seminars and lectures, anything that would involve the library.

- o   Participate in events such as convocations and orientations.
- o   Casual lunches with faculty.
- o   Join the teaching association of your specific discipline.
- This work necessitates a mindset beyond a "40 hour week" and requires the support of library administration and your colleagues.
- In the larger collaboration picture, we need to reach out in other avenues that could spark or influence relationships. Possible suggestions:
  - o   Publish about the information framework in teaching journals outside librarianship
  - o   Present at academic conferences, not library conferences
  - o   Establish a new rhetoric to communicate
  - o   Position the library as a center for Faculty Development conversations or collaborate with those that are

Interaction: How do you cultivate relationships?
Questions?