Birds of a Feather Learn Together: How Four Academic Libraries’ Teachers Flocked Around ACRL’s Threshold Concepts

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Abstract
This poster illustrates how St. John Fisher, SUNY Geneseo, the University of Rochester, and Monroe Community College librarians use collaborative learning techniques and semi-annual meetings to improve their teaching.

In the early 2000s, SUNY Geneseo’s Instruction & Reference Services Team librarians began devoting uninterrupted time to share successes and challenges in information literacy instruction and assimilate new concepts and trends into their practice. After two former SUNY Geneseo librarians joined the Fisher team, the two libraries came together to plan joint meeting where information literacy was to be the main focus. For three years, instruction librarians at Geneseo and their St. John Fisher College counterparts met on a semester basis, leading to what can now be established as a tradition of rotating venues and meeting sponsorship. In Fall 2014, the regular two-party brainstorming session became a four-party affair. Librarians at the University of Rochester and Monroe Community College joined the mix, with the ACRL frameworks surrounding Threshold Concepts on the table. Through joint planning and an agenda filled with active learning strategies, the newly expanded meeting was a success with the participants leaving with a better understanding of the Threshold Concepts, teaching ideas that could speak to the information literacy concepts, and a greater sense of library instruction community within the Rochester area.

Disciplines
Library and Information Science

Comments
Presented at the Rochester Regional Library Council’s Silo Busting Bonanza on March 19, 2015 in Rochester, NY.

This poster presentation is available at Fisher Digital Publications: https://fisherpub.sjfc.edu/library_pub/29
How it all started:  
SUNY Geneseo Instruction & Reference Services Team

Information Literacy instruction librarians devote uninterrupted time each semester to share successes and challenges, and to assimilate new concepts and trends into their practice.

2011
St. John Fisher College Librarians joined the mix

The Dynamics Change a bit:

Institutions alternate as hosts. Host institution selects the topic for discussion. Leads at each institution jointly plan the session.

Past topics of discussion and exploration
- Student focus groups on the benefit of library instruction
- Instituting online components into library instruction
- Student Intrinsic and Extrinsic motivation

Fall 2014
Monroe Community College AND University of Rochester

Join the Geneseo and Fisher Librarians. Motivated by a common desire to learn about Threshold Concepts recently introduced by ACRL’s new Frameworks for Information Literacy for Higher Education.

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Something to rally around........

Threshold Concepts -
What are they and how can we learn about them together?

Working Together:
Working with the Information Literacy Frames, librarians from 4 institutions brainstorm lesson plans for upper and lower level classes, and ideas for assessing student learning.

Here’s the example for the frame entitled “Searching as Strategic Exploration”

We Learned That:
Threshold concepts are:
Transformative, Troublesome, Irreversible, integrative, bounded, and Liminal
We taught each other about these characteristics by drawing representations of these ideas!

The Frames are:
Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
Information Creation as a Process
Information Has Value
Research as Inquiry
Scholarship as Conversation
Searching as Strategic Exploration

We discussed how the frames could be used in our classes and how we might assess them!