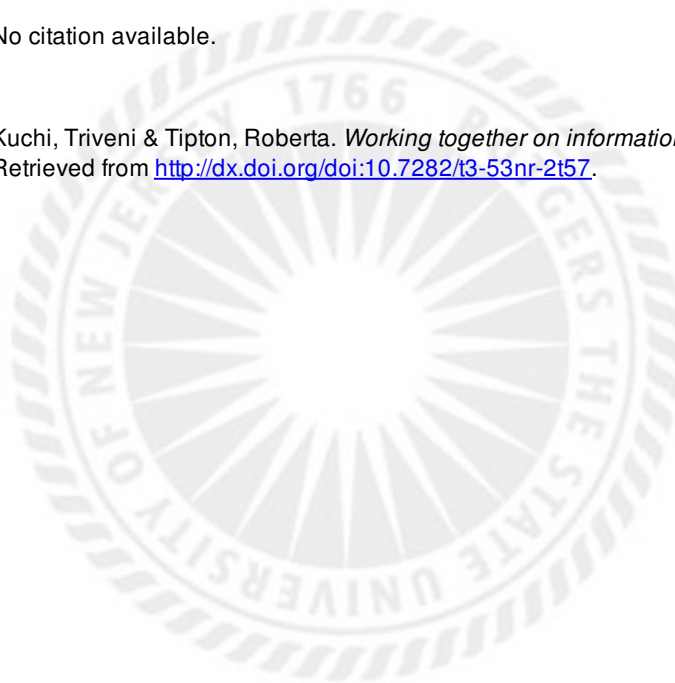


Working together on information literacy initiatives

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Working together
on
Information Literacy initiatives
@Rutgers University Libraries

Triveni Kuchi & Roberta Tipton

Rutgers – The State University of New Jersey

Presentation at the NJLA CUS ACRL-NJ Chapter
Program “All Together How? Collaboration in
Research and Publication.” April 26, 2006.

The Environment

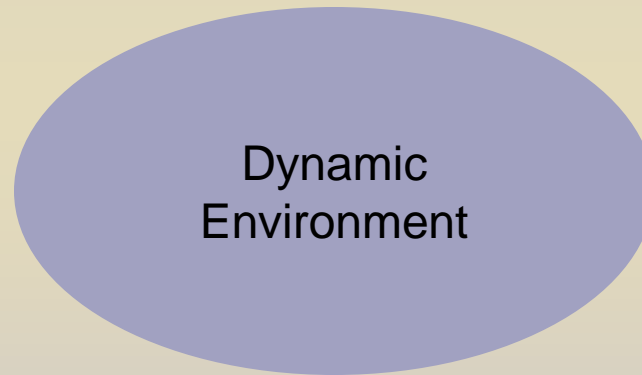


- 2,661 faculty
 - 50,016 students
 - Located geographically across New Jersey at three main campuses. Historically separate colleges and departments
 - Growing number of off-campus and distance education students
- 87 librarians
 - 17,000 students taught in nearly
 - 1,075 library instruction sessions

Complexity

Rutgers University - very large, complex, multicultural & diverse organization

Rutgers University Libraries - influenced by



External organizational
and other cultures

Internal organizational
and other cultures

Academic Librarians Work Collaboratively

- The usual academic environment is highly competitive.
- We're socialized differently by our mission and professional values.
- Library working environments encourage collaboration—team staffing and scarce resources.

There are more than 50 committees at RUL, not including the task forces or working groups or project assignments.

More Context...

Almost everyone who is a member on a committee is also a member on several other committees or work groups and is involved simultaneously in several projects, with competing priorities and/or parallel project or report “deadlines.” Further, new members join and older ones leave.

Working Together on IL’s various teams, task forces, sub committees... are

Names of committee members

In February of 2003....

Surprise!

NOT!

Three librarians (from different RU campuses) heard

**“You are now a member of a
Learning Framework Study
Group!”**

...Here is the Charge, and the Deadline for your report is June!

We were excited, pleased to get an opportunity, but...
were feeling a little pressure...



actually we were uneasy, anxious, restless...

The Learning Frameworks Study Group was charged to “identify and study learning frameworks and recommend an appropriate framework for Rutgers University Libraries’ Information Literacy instruction.” In addition, we had to recommend an appropriate open source online information literacy tutorial.

We had to define a “learning framework,” and in addition to surveying the literature, we had to particularly read “How People Learn,” – a 400 page book and summarize it into our report.

At our first meeting, we informally chose a project leader and clarified the goals. At the time, it seemed, we just had to read a book...However,...

In March and April 2003, we started to read and review the book, but were consumed in heavy library instruction schedules! Not unplanned of course....

“Too many commitments, too little time..”

By May 2003 : We were in a panic and realized that “we need to do something” about it!

...the June deadline seemed to help us get into action...

- We shared citations and bibliography furiously over email for a little while...
- Shared comments about the “How People Learn” book.
- Collectively argued points about “What the authors meant vs. what we understood about certain concepts!”
- It was all however, not coming together! The learning framework catered more to “education,” but we needed something that would bring relevance to library instruction issues.
- The only way was to keep on looking, analyzing and reviewing. Finally (felt almost luckily) we came across an e-learning framework that was more meaningful to adapt to our needs. We decided on an...

Integrated Approach

Combining the four principles of Learning Environments from the *How People Learn* book with the technological, resource and maintenance support, institutional, and management & administrative dimensions suggested by Khan’s *A Framework for E-Learning* we pulled together a foundation for information literacy instruction at Rutgers University Libraries.

It was time for the release...

“You’ve made a go”

“You will know if you made a mistake”

Institutional Involvement

Learning Environments

Teaching Materials

**Sweet Success!
Learning
Framework
For RU Library
Instruction**

The report is available at:
http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/rul/staff/groups/instructional_services/reports/learning_frameworks.shtml

Resource & Maintenance Support

Management & Administration

Rutgers University Libraries

SEARCHPATH



Searchpath, a new Libraries service, is an interactive online tutorial about finding and using worthwhile information sources in the libraries and on the Web. Searchpath will help students save time, produce higher quality research, and get higher grades. Try [Searchpath](#) now!

Making Searchpath@Rutgers

Saga of a Systemwide

Instructional Services Committee

**Thanks to AUL and Webmaster, coauthors
of our original presentation to the New
Jersey Academic Library Directors on May
20, 2005, and collaborators extraordinaire.**

What We Did

Adapted a tutorial created by Western Michigan University for use by students, faculty, and librarians at Rutgers University.

- ❖ Rewrote content for our catalog, index, approaches
- ❖ Created backend for handling quizzes and gathering statistics

Instructional Services Committee

- Instruction coordinators from every unit of Rutgers
- Content
- Assessment plan
- Implementation

Why a Systemwide Online Tutorial?

- “You’re not doing anything”
- Maintaining our own smaller tutorials was becoming troublesome
- Developing and keeping momentum on projects was difficult.

Contributions of the ISC

- We were very enthusiastic about information literacy
- We had many years of experience in the classroom and at the reference desk
- We were experts at getting and sharing ideas
- Most of us had specialized degrees or extra training in education or information literacy.

...But We Had Some Issues

- No designated tutorial writers
- Everybody on the ISC already had a job or two. Or three. Or four...
- We lacked IT expertise and couldn't really command it.

Enter the Champion

- AUL provided the focus...
- Provided deadlines...
- Acted as liaison with University Librarian's cabinet...
- Had the webmaster and a programmer reporting to her.

Contributions of the Webmaster

- Webmaster understood the IT behind what we were trying to do...
- Had experience with project management...
- “You get one chance”

Freedom vs. Structure

- Subcommittees and small working groups
- Mandate and deadlines
- Editorial oversight
- Necessary resources

Two Kinds of Leadership

- Managerial
- Facilitative

A few thoughts to share...



Setting yourself some parameters beforehand and gaining a common understanding of the goals of the committee is crucial for success.



Is there a right or wrong way to collaborate as members of a team? No. we believe all teams are different, but we can learn and efficiently use our team as members or leaders if we inform or are informed about process. Communication is essential.



Collaboration takes lots of commitment and dedication, and a very thick skin with no time or place for bruised egos. Keeping the goal of achieving the "charge" or objective of the project or committee should be uppermost.



Finally, a successful collaboration leaves you with a feeling of a remarkable sense of shared accomplishment.
"Wow! We did that."

A few parting thoughts ...

Future of Collaboration (in libraries)

- ACRL's Environmental Scan: 5-10 year Planning Horizon assumes increasing collaborative librarianship and collaboration activities within and among libraries, as well as with external partners at various levels - university, state, national, international. Expect increasing collaboration in terms of acquiring/accessing collections, teaching/learning, teamwork/groupwork, and so on.
- Expect to see more performance appraisals that place a higher value on collaborative research and projects.
- Collaboration and team work is a skill libraries and librarians must continue to invest in, for it is and will become a proficiency that we cannot do without.

Thank you!

kuchi@rutgers.edu

tipton@rutgers.edu

Any Questions?