



Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex School Library System

K-12 Regional Information Literacy Curriculum

Introduction

During the summer of 2004, 21 School Library Media Specialists (SLMS) from the Washington-Saratoga-Warren-Hamilton-Essex BOCES School Library System collaboratively created a **skills based information literacy curriculum**. Closely aligned with the New York State Learning Standards and National Information Literacy Standards from the American Association of School Librarians, this **K-12 skills matrix provides a platform for learning**. The draft curriculum embraces the evidence from 15 state studies demonstrating the correlation between quality school library media programs and student achievement. In content and rationale, the curriculum is fundamentally a tool for instruction in information literacy. Carefully designed as context-dependent skills set and based on the Big6™ research method, the curriculum connects with all grades, all subject areas, and all learners.



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Instructional Features

- Sequential with flexible ranges of skills development for local adaptation
- Key skills connect to the development of literacy and independent reading
- Defines an authentic process of information problem solving
- Big 6 skills unifies the matrix with steps including:
 - Task Analysis
 - Information Seeking Strategies
 - Location and Access
 - Use of Information
 - Evaluation of Process and Product
 - Synthesis
- Grade level benchmarks incorporated
- Instruction at various levels reinforces and expands prior knowledge
- Emphasizes the development of meaningful questions for individual inquiry
- Designed for collaborative planning and instruction with the classroom teacher
- Emphasizes active learner, engaged learner
- Life-long learning key outcome

Rationale for a Regional Information Literacy Curriculum

- Information literacy has become a transforming force in the creation of life long learners.
- Information literacy skills and information problem solving are at the core of the New York State Standards, and national standards in many disciplines. The impact of the skills on student performance and life long learning is at the heart of this emphasis.
- The Learning Standards define a thinking, active and literate learner.
- An information problem solving curriculum is universal, useful in all curricular areas, predisposed to interdisciplinary study, and empowering to learners.
- Fifteen National Studies since 1998 correlate quality SLM programs with student achievement. School library programs where a SLMS teaches information literacy skills and information problem solving are the **NUMBER ONE INDICATOR** of student achievement resulting in a 10 to 20% boost in reading scores, improved performance on state and local assessments (compared with performance in library impoverished schools).
- Collaboration between SLMS and teachers to develop and support resource based learning activities is another key indicator of student success. This leads to engaging students in active learning models such as information problem solving.
- Information literacy creates a platform for genuine understanding of the world around the learner and a strong foundation for future learning.
- A core curriculum is in itself a standard and a framework. Research shows that better quality outcomes come from standards for learning, and standards on a regional level are a key piece in progress toward authentic learning.
- A matrix for teaching and learning information literacy is now essential.

Next Steps

Each SLMS in the WSWHE BOCES School Library System will receive a copy of the Regional Information Literacy Curriculum by September of 2004. The SLMS who created the skills matrix and others will begin to introduce this instructional matrix into their schools. They will share the curriculum as a tool for instruction with their administrators. They will begin introducing it into their collaborations with classroom teachers. Some pilot implementation and discussion at the local level will be the basis for early and ongoing refinement of the skills matrix. Local adaptations and suggested revisions will be shared and utilized in revision workshops. Feedback is very important.

When a revised skills matrix has been developed, initiatives are planned to train school library media specialist and teachers in collaboration to design and implement resource based learning experience. The skills from the matrix would be the basis for instruction in information literacy, but the content of the learning experience connects to classroom curriculum in one or more academic discipline. Interdisciplinary learning experiences address interconnected and mutually reinforcing skills development.

In other words:

- Skills matrix shared with regional SLMS, teachers, and administrators
- Workshop participants support their colleagues and begin interpreting and using the matrix
- SLMS begin to pilot the application of the matrix in their school library programs
- Opportunities to collaboratively integrate matrix skills in resource based learning are sought and assessed
- Broad based feedback and analysis contributes to the formal refinement and revision of the information literacy curriculum
- Revision workshops address local experience and feedback
- A refined information literacy curriculum supports elements of best practice in local school library programs
- Workshops to train SLMS and teachers in the development of integrated learning experiences are scheduled
- Skills from the information literacy curriculum are integrated in to the grade level content areas in resource based learning experience
- Further assessment, revision, development
- Analyze direct and indirect outcomes for students as they progress through the model

“Do what you can where you are with what you have.”

Theodore Roosevelt

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Student Achievement

Fifteen current state studies correlate quality school library programs and student achievement. A summary of these studies is available in the School Library Systems Association Advocacy Toolkit located on the web at <http://www.crbsls.org/slsa/student-achievement.html>. From the first Colorado Study in 1992 to dozens of related studies across the country, (some as recent as 2004), evidence mounts to prove the tie between student success and school library programs. In many studies the presence of a quality school library program is the number one indicator of student achievement, even in impoverished schools with multiple factors in place that put students at risk. Achievement means markedly higher reading scores, improved performance on local assessments, state assessments, and even standardized tests. The Regional Information Literacy Curriculum targets improved student performance. Some features of school library media programs that boost student achievement include the following:

- Presence of a school library media center in the school
- Certified school library media specialist engaged with learning
- Instructional role for the school library media specialist
- Collaboration between the school library media specialist and classroom teacher in the teaching of context dependent information problem solving skills
- High level of integration of core curriculum with resource based learning experience
- Number of visits to the library by the student
- Number of hours that learner is engaged in instruction in information literacy by the certified SLMS
- Quality information resources, number of books, periodicals, videos
- Quality literature and literacy development opportunities with the school library media specialist
- Access to quality information technology resources
- Planning role of the SLMS in technology
- Staff in school library media centers to allow the SLMS to concentrate in instructional priorities
- Broad based access to the media center at point of need
- Cognitive efficacy developing in the reflective learner, the information problem solver
- Development of independent research questions and thesis statements creates meaningful learning experiences
- Collaboration and substantive conversation between teacher, SLMS and students
- Assessment by teacher and SLMS in the information problem solving process improves performance
- Standards incorporated, benchmarks defined
- Authentic process and products engages and motivates the learner