

**Improving Information Fluency:
Creating a Model Web Page Design Project for Use in
Undergraduate Courses**

Dr. Samuel B. Fee, Instructional Technology Coordinator, Assistant Professor of Education
Mary Beth Garriott, Reference Librarian
Constance V. Klimke, Reference Librarian
Dr. Margaret G. Richey, Associate Professor of Biology and Biochemistry

Centre College

ABSTRACT

This proposal requests funds to support the development and dissemination of a model web page design project for introductory undergraduate courses. The model will provide a blueprint for achieving specific information fluency objectives in an undergraduate course. The goals of the design project will be to improve the information fluency of students by focusing on developing their critical thinking, information literacy, and computer skills. The implementation of this design project in a course will require collaboration between the instructor and the students in the course, college librarians, and academic information technologists. The proposal leaders will collaboratively develop this model during the summer of 2001, and it will be disseminated to the faculty and staff of Centre College and other colleges within the ACS consortium beginning in the summer of 2001.

RATIONALE

This proposal directly meets the goals of the ACS Information Fluency Project. Specifically, it will:

1. foster collaboration among faculty, librarians, information technologists and students,
2. provide a model for integrating technology into academic courses,
3. promote information fluency among students by focusing on critical thinking, information literacy and computer skills, and
4. maximize consortium resources by a planned sharing of this model with faculty and staff at Centre College and other ACS institutions.

DESCRIPTION

The primary challenge facing Centre College and its attempt to incorporate information technology into the curriculum revolves around a limited understanding of the more complex issues surrounding information fluency. The best approach to addressing such a problem is to deal with the challenge in a collaborative fashion. In this case, faculty are needed for content mastery, librarians for their research skills, and IT staff are required for their technical expertise. By working together, these professionals can help other faculty and professional staff build a better understanding of technology and its role in instruction. This will help Centre College move beyond simple Information Literacy to a more sophisticated understanding of Information Fluency.

This proposal requests funds to support the development and dissemination of a model web page design project for introductory undergraduate courses. The purpose of the model is to articulate specific information fluency objectives for the project and to furnish a detailed plan for implementing this project in introductory undergraduate courses in a variety of disciplines. A specific example of implementation for an introductory Biology course will be provided. The strategies for improving information fluency will be based on the "Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education" proposed by the Association of College and Research Libraries (<http://www.ala.org/acrl/ilstandardlo.html>).

The goals of the design project itself are to improve the information fluency of students by focusing on developing their critical thinking, information literacy, and computer skills. While completing the web page design project, the students will be instructed in:

1. how to select a research topic that is appropriate to the course and assignment,
2. how to determine the type of and amount of information needed to complete the assignment,
3. how to search for and access that information,
4. how to evaluate the information critically,
5. how to organize the information,
6. how to use the information ethically and legally, and
7. how to effectively present the information on a web page.

The implementation of this design project will require collaboration between the course instructor, the students in the course, college librarians, and academic information technologists. Upon the successful completion of the project, each student will have improved in his/her ability to locate, gather, organize, evaluate, and effectively disseminate information.

The proposal leaders, faculty and staff at Centre College, will collaboratively develop this model during the summer of 2001. The model for the design project will be shared with faculty and staff at Centre College at a workshop to be offered in late summer, prior to the start of Fall 2001 classes. This workshop will be held in a computer lab on the campus of Centre College. This facility will allow the participants to get hands-on experience with the computer equipment and information resources that will be needed to implement the project. A step-by-step implementation plan, including demonstrations of search tools/strategies and web page composition software (Netscape Composer™ and Dreamweaver™), will be presented. There will be time allotted for individual exploration of, and assistance with these tools. In addition, the role of the course instructor, librarians, and IT staff in the project will be explained, and an

example of using the project in a specific course, Introduction to Biology, will be reviewed. It is expected that a significant number of faculty workshop participants will incorporate the design project into one or more classes, and that library and IT staff will participate in the implementation of these projects during 2001-02.

FOLLOW-UP AND EVALUATION

Centre faculty and staff who participate in the August, 2001 workshop will be surveyed at the end of the fall, winter, and spring terms about their utilization of and/or participation in a web-based design project in one or more classes. This survey will determine the number of courses in which this project was implemented, the success of the course project in terms of achieving the information fluency objectives, problems with implementing the project, and suggestions for improvement. In addition, faculty and staff who participated in implementing the project will be invited to an on-campus project review meeting at which they can share their ideas about using this project to increase information fluency. The survey responses will also be discussed at this meeting. The project leaders will revise/refine the model project based on the survey responses and conclusions from the project review meeting (June, 2002).

DISSEMINATION

To other ACS institutions

After the model has been “field-tested” and evaluated at Centre, it can be disseminated to other ACS institutions via the Information Fluency Project web page (Summer 2002). This would include a detailed description of the project and a summary of the results from Centre courses. A 1-2 day workshop for ACS faculty and staff could be offered at the ACS Tech Center in the summer of 2002. This workshop would provide a step-by-step guide to implementing the project in a variety of courses. This could (depending on the needs of the participants) include instruction on how to create a web page using Netscape Composer™ and/or Dreamweaver™. This workshop could be led by two or more of the Centre project leaders and one or more Centre faculty/staff, representing different disciplines, who implemented the project in their class(es).

To other institutions

Information on the project will be shared with other institutions via:

- the Bibliographic Instruction listserv and LOEX (Library Orientation & Instruction Exchange) (Summer 2002).
- a presentation at the Kentucky Library Association annual meeting (Fall, 2002).
- a presentation at the Kentucky Academy of Sciences, Education section, annual meeting (November, 2002).
- a presentation at the Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference, annual meeting (February, 2002).

PROPOSED TIMELINE

I. Development and on-campus dissemination of model (Summer 2001)

The project leaders will meet at least five times to:

- A. Identify the specific information fluency objectives of the design project (June).
- B. Review, evaluate, and organize strategies for meeting the objectives (June).
- C. Develop a general model for the project, with an example of course-specific implementation (July-August).
- D. Plan the presentation of the model, including instructional materials/resources, to Centre faculty and staff (August).
- E. Present the model to Centre faculty and staff in one or more, depending upon demand, one-day workshops (late August).

II. Evaluation of project implementation (December, 2001-June, 2002)

- A. Distribute survey to participating faculty and staff (December for Fall classes, early February, 2002 for Winter classes, and early May for Spring classes).
- B. On-campus project review meeting (mid-late May).
- C. Model revision/refinement by project leaders (June).

III. Off-campus dissemination of model (Summer 2002)

- A. Dissemination via Information Fluency Project web-site, Bibliographic Instruction listserv, LOEX (June, 2002).
- B. ACS Workshop at ACS Tech Center (July, 2002).
- C. Presentation at annual meetings of the Kentucky Library Association, Kentucky Academy of Sciences, Kentucky Teaching and Learning Conference (Fall/Winter, 2002).