

A Journey into Information Fluency:

Integrating Information Fluency into the Hendrix College Journeys Course

INSTITUTION

Hendrix College
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PROJECT LEADERS

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PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Introduction

Developing lifelong learners with the intellectual ability to research, reason, and think critically is a central mission of liberal arts education. Information fluency (IF), representing the convergence of information literacy, computer literacy, and critical thinking skills, is integral to this endeavor. In the Boyer Commission Report, *Reinventing Undergraduate Education: A Blueprint for America's Research Universities*, the value of IF is clearly expressed with specific recommendations to actively engage students in framing significant questions, researching answers, and communicating results. Certainly, the introduction and integration of IF skills on the Hendrix College campus would multiply opportunities for self-directed learning, the engagement in a variety of information sources and technologies, and the sharpening of critical thinking skills.

Information Fluency Workshop

In the 21st century academy, IF skills are honed in the library, in the computer lab, and in the classroom. Consequently, it is imperative that information technologists, teaching faculty, and librarians work together to educate prepared minds. The proposed project is designed to give the Hendrix College community a taste of the

richness IF can bring to classroom experience. Specifically, an engaging information fluency expert will be invited to lead Hendrix faculty members (and selected invitees from other academic institutions) in a one day IF workshop. The ideal candidate will have classroom teaching experience and an affiliation with the National Forum on Information Literacy or the Association of College and Research Libraries' Institute for Information. Additionally, the IF workshop leader will have the ability to positively contribute to IF successes at Hendrix.

Length of workshop: one day

Agenda for workshop:

- Collaborative learning in the information age
- Role of IF in higher education
- Resource-based learning
- Teaching critical thinking

IMMEDIATE DESIRED OUTCOMES OF IF WORKSHOP

Cooperative Efforts Launched from Hendrix's Journeys Course

This workshop will, in addition to increasing IF awareness, foster a spirit of collaboration among Bailey Library, the Information Technology Department (IT), and the Hendrix faculty. An excellent forum for fostering these collaborative efforts will be the Journeys class. Journeys is a newly developed course, required of all first year students, exploring the world's intellectual traditions. Inspired by the college's motto "toward the whole person," the Journeys course seeks to engage students in a cogent consideration of what it means to become a whole human being and to provide students with a variety of texts and works that will lead them to reflect deeply on the paths their own lives might take. The Library and IT will work collaboratively with the Journeys teaching faculty to establish a tangible project, clearly benefiting both students and faculty, and serving as a model for other courses.

Creation of an IF Web Page and Special Library Collection Supporting Journeys Students and Faculty

Program Leaders and other collaborators will draw upon knowledge gained in the IF workshop to develop an Information Fluency web page and a special library collection (to be a part of a larger special collection supporting the Journeys course). The web page will not only provide content about IF and the library's IF special collection, but also will offer Journeys students methods of researching course topics and will teach them to think critically about the quality and validity of the resources they locate. Librarians and Information Technology professionals will conduct workshops targeting Journeys students in order to introduce the IF web pages, teach relevant research skills, and discuss critical analysis of resources. The Journeys course, a required course for all first semester freshmen, will be an excellent launching point for future IF endeavors since it will allow all entering freshmen to develop skills necessary for academic success and life-long learning.

RATIONALE

A one day IF workshop led by a notable expert will increase faculty awareness of the intellectual significance of IF and will consequently provide future impetus for faculty to integrate IF into the curriculum. Moreover, the tangible desired outcomes will hopefully strengthen the conviction that IF successes will benefit the entire Hendrix College community. As Hendrix moves its academic calendar from a trimester to a semester system, the entire general education curriculum is undergoing revision—including the development of the Journeys course. This time of significant curricular change seems a natural opportunity to introduce IF into the curriculum, and the Journeys course is the perfect vehicle to ensure all entering students develop IF skills (through the collaborative efforts of the Journeys faculty, IT, and the library) necessary for academic and life-long success. This project can, with the proper dissemination of results, serve as an excellent model to future IF endeavors at Hendrix and other ACS institutions.

We believe this project exemplifies the key goals noted in the Call for Proposals (http://www.colleges.org/~if/if_cfp02.html). It will foster collaboration among faculty, librarians, and information technologists; it will provide members of the Hendrix community skills necessary to integrate IF into meaningful academic activities (researching Journeys, for example); and it will establish mechanisms to share ideas (via the IF web page and library special collection).

STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS

- Email messages to Hendrix faculty
- Article in *This Week @ Hendrix* and the *Palladian*
- Invitations extended to selected faculty, librarians, and information technologists at other area academic institutions
- Announcement to the Journeys faculty

TARGET AUDIENCE

The primary audience will be our faculty, especially those faculty members teaching the new Journeys class. In fact, the attendance of the Journeys faculty is imperative since we are planning to use the Journeys course as a base for the integration of IF principles into the Hendrix community. From this foundation, we can build collaborative relationships between our faculty, library and IT department.

EVALUATION OF PROJECT

- An initial survey in which participants judge their level of IF knowledge before and after the IF workshop
- Feedback from participants describing how they might integrate what they have learned into their own classroom instruction
- A follow-up survey given at the end of the semester asking Journeys faculty members (as well as other faculty participants) to describe ways they have successfully integrated IF principles in their classes

PLANS FOR DISSEMINATION OF RESULTS

Ideally, we would like to communicate details of this project at an ACS conference. Additionally, we plan to publish an article about the project in the Southeastern Library Association's *Journal* and in *Arkansas Libraries*. Moreover, a news item in the *Palladian* providing information about the project and linking to a project narrative on the Arkansas Library Association's web page are options.

SUGGESTIONS FOR REPLICATION AT OTHER ACS CAMPUSES

The project, bringing a recognized expert in the area of Information Fluency to lead a workshop, is very easy to replicate. The Project Leaders would be eager to pass along contact information as well as programming schedules and handouts to other ACS members.

SCHEDULING

The IF workshop must occur at a time when the Hendrix faculty can conveniently attend and still have time to incorporate what they have learned into their fall 2002 courses. The availability of the selected speaker is an additional consideration. Late spring or early summer 2002 is the present target.

PRELIMINARY BUDGET FOR WORKSHOP

<i>Description</i>	<i>Expense</i>
Speaker's fee	\$1,800
Room and board for speaker	\$300
Speaker's travel	\$800
Brochures	\$350
Refreshments	\$850
TOTAL Expense	\$4,100

PROJECT CONTACT

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