Information Literacy Course – The Perception of Students and Professors: University of Zadar Case

Dora Rubinić, University library
Ivanka Stričević and Mate Juric, Department of Information Sciences
University of Zadar, Croatia

ECIL 2013, Istanbul, 22-25 October
Is there anything new in...

1. ...information literacy (IL) as elective standalone course at the university?

2. ...librarians teaching IL skills?

3. ...the need for collaboration between professors and librarians?
IL education at the University of Zadar

librarians’ individual work with students

INFORMATION LITERACY elective course

some IL skills covered by the research methodology courses

Since 2011/12 - elective course Information Literacy
librarians from the University Library
+
professors from the Department of Information Sciences
Information literacy - elective course

- ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards
- generic skills
- practical exercises
- students from various departments
- 3 ECTS

INFORMATION LITERACY elective course

- to improve students’ information literacy competencies
- to increase the awareness of the University Library educational role and capacities
Why this research?

1. Development of IL course based on research results

2. Development of more advanced forms of IL education at the University
Research: goals

to investigate:

students

1) expectations from the IL course
2) self-evaluation of IL competencies

professors

1) importance of IL competences within their curricula
2) assessment of students’ IL competencies
3) possible collaboration with librarians
Research: methods

Survey
- 2 generations of IL course attendees (N=53)

Students

Survey
- (N=20)
- + interview (N=10 out of 20)

Professors
Focus in the research was on the competencies represented in the IL course:

- Using online databases
- Formulating search queries
- Finding the relevant information
- Evaluating information sources
- Structuring the term papers
- Using information ethically
Students' self-assessment of IL competencies prior to the IL course

- Using online databases: 2.48
- Formulating search queries: 3.45
- Finding the relevant information: 3.51
- Evaluating information sources: 3.30
- Structuring the term papers: 4.19
- Using information ethically: 4.21

Likert-type scale:
1 = poor
5 = excellent
Professors' assessment of students' IL competencies shown in their courses

- Using online databases: 2.45
- Formulating search queries: 2.85
- Finding the relevant information: 3.05
- Evaluating information sources: 2.84
- Structuring the term papers: 3.58
- Using information ethically: 2.75

Likert-type scale
1 = poor
5 = excellent
Professors' assessment of the competences’ importance

- Using online databases: 3.55
- Formulating search queries: 4.45
- Finding the relevant information: 4.60
- Evaluating information sources: 4.55
- Structuring the term papers: 4.50
- Using information ethically: 4.50

Likert-type scale
1 = low importance
5 = high importance
Highlights from the surveys’ results

**Students** believe they know much more than the professors perceive they know.

Despite the students’ self-confidence, they see the IL course as needed and useful.

**Professors** rate the IL competencies as highly important - much more than:
- the students believe they possess
- the professors perceive the students possess
Some professors perceive IL as a set of skills that is separate from learning and study in the disciplinary context!

“...for my courses it is not important to know how to search (for information) because I give them the readings I selected as valuable although I am aware that maybe it is not the best way. For their final thesis it is important that they know how to do their research independently.” (P3)
Library affirmation

Some professors become aware of the library’s educational role and capacities only through the IL course!

“I learned to do it all myself and I did not know that our library offers such service, that someone can help me with that.” (P3)
Professors and librarians collaboration

Some professors are aware of the need for collaboration with librarians in building IL competencies within a disciplinary context

“I think that the collaboration with the librarians is needed (..) customized especially for the students of Ethnology because every disciplinary area has its own peculiarities.” (P10)
Conclusions of the research and follow up

**Standalone elective course** in IL which includes librarians as teachers is generally not new practice

**BUT**

it is important in **building IL culture at the University** because it:

- improve students’ IL competencies
- raises professors’ and students’ awareness about IL
- opens up space for more complex forms of teaching IL
- contributes to the recognition of librarians as partners in the educational process
Questions?
Comments?
Suggestions?