

Preparing Academic Librarians for a Changing Role: A Canadian Information Literacy Program Case Study.

*The 6th World Conference on Continuing Professional Development
and Workplace Learning for the Library and Information Professions,
Oslo, Norway
August 11 2005*

Dr. Ganga Dakshinamurti, Albert G. Cohen Management Library, University of
Manitoba

Betty Braaksma, Information Literacy Coordinator, University of Manitoba Libraries

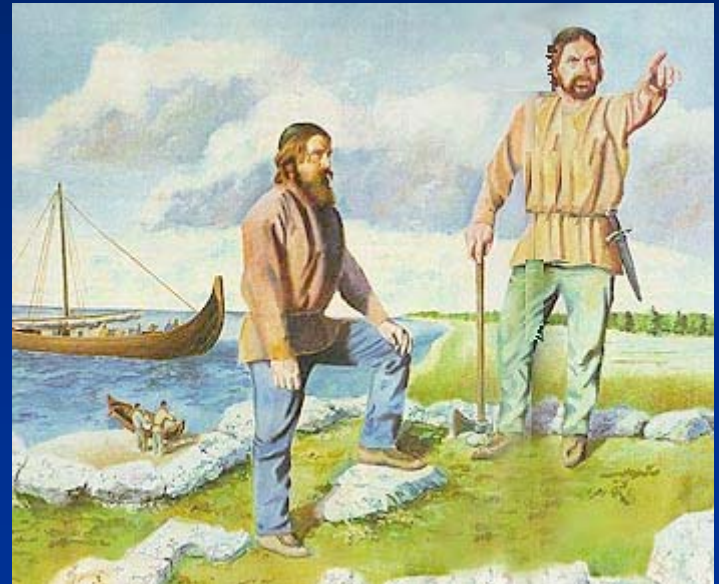
Where is this statue?



Gimli, Manitoba!

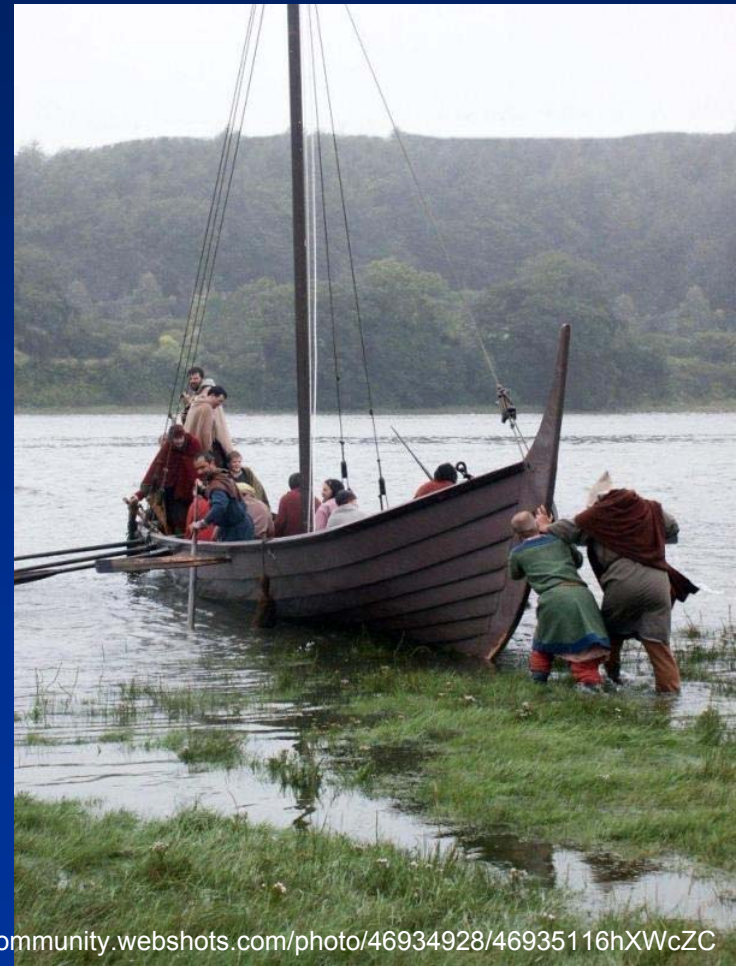
Let's talk about perceptions...

How do you picture Vikings?



Realities

- Ships for both raids and trade were crewed by social equals/freeborn men, with captain/owner directing activities
- Crews shared in booty and merchandise
- Crews were more like what we would call teams today
- All worked toward a common goal and shared the rewards





Voyage of Discovery for Information Literacy

http://fp.fullfathom.f9.co.uk/images/Viking_ship_1_web.jpg

- Discovery: Librarians need to work collegially with faculty to make IL a success
- **Discovery: Librarians need to make the voyage from trainer to teacher**
- How do librarians take that voyage?

Today's agenda

- Literature review of IL
 - Program characteristics
 - Coordinator characteristics
 - Librarian characteristics
- Case study, University of Manitoba Libraries
- SWOT analysis
- Development of IL model
- Roles of stakeholders
 - Administration
 - Faculty
 - Students
 - **Librarians: Role of the librarian within the model**

Perceptions of Librarians in Information Literacy

- How do librarians see themselves?
- How do others see librarians?
- How **SHOULD** librarians be seen?
- How do librarians move from one role to another?

3 Key Elements from the Literature Review:

- Characteristics of an IL Program
- Characteristics of IL Coordinators
- Characteristics of IL Librarians

An IL Program Should:

- Be inquiry-based
- Be student centred
- Promote academic success
- Support lifelong learning
- Address user needs and abilities
- Develop and use learning objectives
- Be an integral part of the curriculum

An IL Coordinator should be:

- a coach
- an advocate
- a builder
- a collaborator
- a politician
- a marketer
- a leader



An IL Librarian should be:

- A collaborator
- A colleague
- A participant
- A designer

- ***A teacher, not a trainer***



Case study summary

- Information literacy in Canada fairly new and developing – looks to U.S. & Australia for inspiration
- University of Manitoba
 - One of Canada's largest & oldest universities
 - Beginnings in agriculture; emphasis on sciences & technology now
 - Prides itself in ease of access to programs

Case study summary cont'd.

- Librarians at U of M have official faculty status, but....
- Are not faculty equals
- Faculty perceive librarians in a traditional way, particularly in regard to instruction
- Some inroads being made – success noted in particular with Textiles Sciences program

Textiles Sciences

- Initiative grew out of longstanding relationships between bibliographers & faculty
- New program = new methodologies
- Interdisciplinary nature of the program makes it ideal for IL
- Have worked through the summer with faculty, 2 new courses with IL-embedded outcomes will be launched in September
- Catalyst for change = U of M IL program

SWOT analysis of U of M IL program....so far

Strengths

- Multi-branch IL committee: recommended Coordinator position & foundation of new program
- Support of UML administration: Funding for Coordinator's position
- Sanctioned administrative framework: strategic plan, terms of reference, acceptance of ACRL standards
- Pilot/Model programs in development
- ***Longstanding instructional relationships with subject faculty***

SWOT continued

Weaknesses:

- Uncertainty over new roles
- Bureaucracy vs flexibility
- Collections vs instruction
- Lack of funding
- ***Satisfaction with traditional methods***

SWOT continued

Opportunities:

- Pilot programs are underway
 - Textiles
 - eTools
- IL requested in student survey
- ***Possible U of M culture shift toward IL awareness***

SWOT continued

Threats:

- Lack of funding
- Limited/uneven support – administration & librarians
- Uncertainty re: program objectives
- Mixed perceptions of librarians by faculty
- ***Librarian perceptions of role: what is a librarian?????***

Comment from Kari Gulbraar's survey

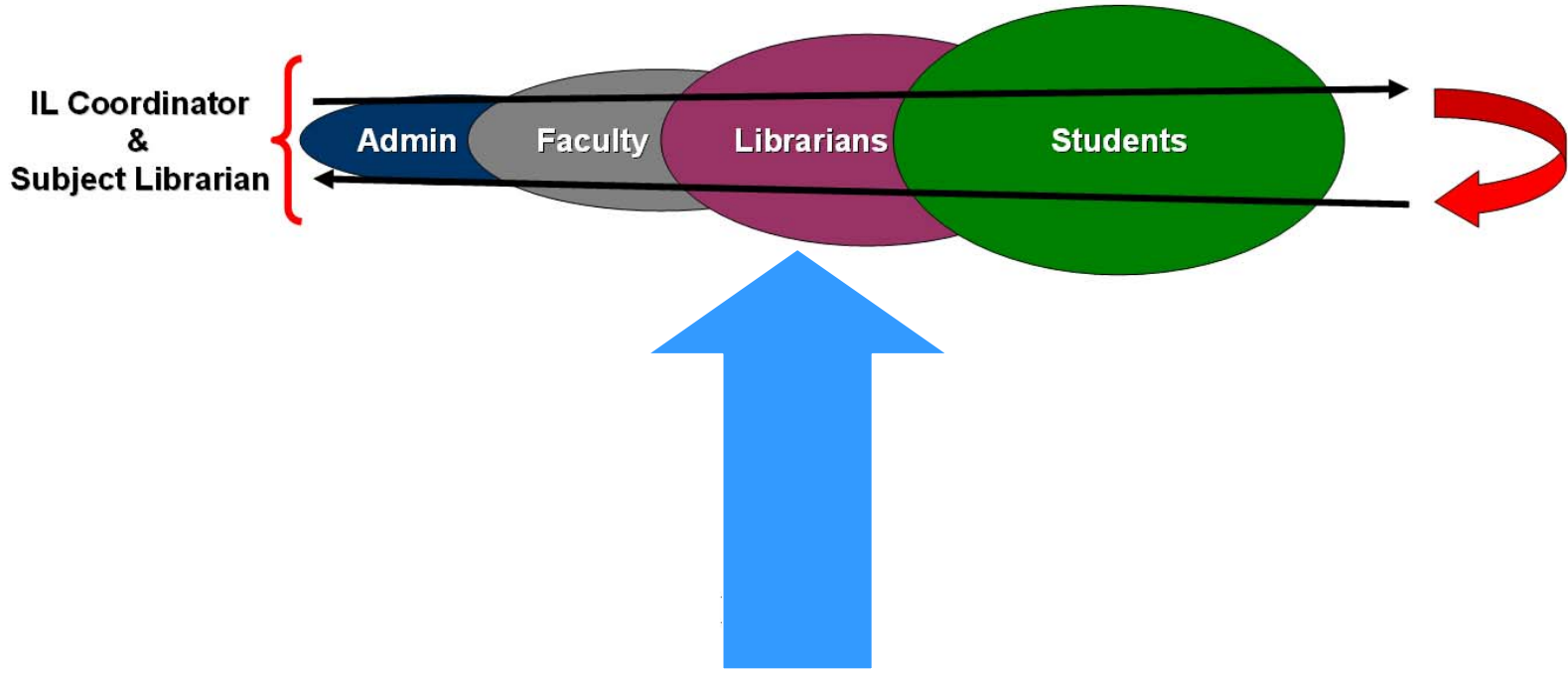
“you imply a need for change?
Since when is teaching
OLD?”

How do librarians see themselves as teachers?

- Emphasis continues to be on collections and access to them
- Leads to an orientation to products and how to use them
- Leads to acceptance of a trainer\BI\one-shot model
- Leads to a comfort zone –it's what we know how to do best

Our Model of IL Program Development: The Big Picture

- Looks at the relationship among stakeholders in the development of an information literacy program
- Attempts to portray the continuum of change required for each of the stakeholders in the development of a new program
- Assumes that coordinator and librarian(s) work as partners with faculty and students to achieve recognized goals



Librarian subset: identifying a continuum for professional development

SWOT analysis:

Librarians are trainers,
not teachers



Librarians

Literature review:

Librarians must be teachers,
not trainers

What is a trainer?

Someone who:

- Is expert in the use of a product or products e.g. a catalogue, a database
- Keeps up with product changes
- Is comfortable with technology
- Explains products to others
- Fulfils immediate user needs, i.e shows patron how to use product
- Can negotiate with patron to get needed resources (i.e. reference interview)
- Is task oriented
- Emphasizes concretes
- Is trained to not give opinions, advice, guidance

Emphasis is on access to information, not the information itself.

What is a teacher?

Someone who:

- works collaboratively with faculty to design IL integrated curriculum in their subject areas;
- prepares lesson plans with clearly identified learning outcomes;
- ensures that the learning outcomes are being met (assignments, etc.)
- is vigilant to the needs of learners' different learning styles and capabilities,
- develops effective presentation skills, including expertise in using technological aids such as PowerPoint
- varies teaching methods to suit all learners;
- incorporates both web-based as well as traditional resources
- is proactive in identifying subject areas that call for IL program and initiate discussion with faculty to set up collaborative work to provide integrated IL program.

***Emphasis is on using & understanding information,
not just accessing it***

Starting the voyage of development



<http://vestrusvikingships.vikingagevessels.org/images/Islandingur.jpg>

1. Find common ground

- Good communicators
- Good problem solvers
- Good negotiators (reference interview skills)
- Experience with technology
- Expertise with literature of the subject
- Committed to continuous improvement

2. Leave the safety of the harbour

- Move people out of their comfort zones
- Recognize that you can't move people from trainer to teacher in one step
- Aim for incremental improvement to move librarians to from one stage to another



Example: Move from trainer to trainer/teacher (intermediate)

- Identify 1 or 2 achievable outcomes, e.g. Develop facility with Powerpoint
- Build on recognized staff strengths, e.g. Supplement good speaking skills with technology training & support
- Downplay weaker areas, e.g. Incorporate hands-on use of database for an assignment, instead of demonstrating database
- Identify and secure resources to accomplish development objectives, e.g. Take advantage of existing Powerpoint classes

Example: Move from trainer/teacher to teacher

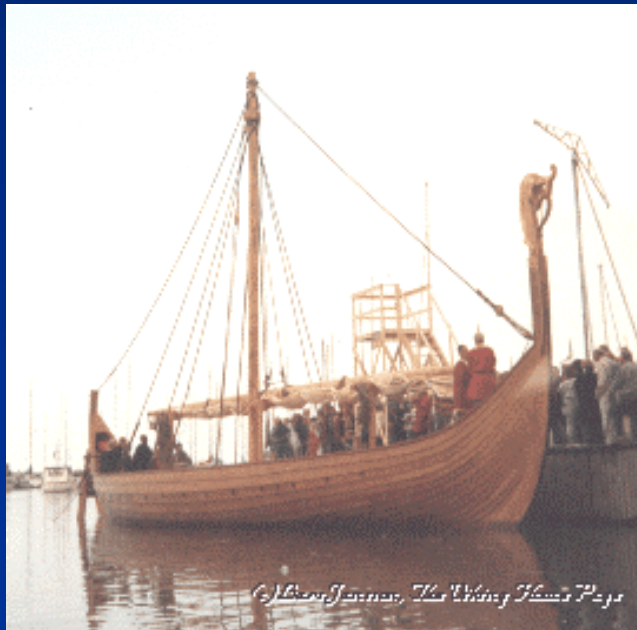
- Identify 1 or 2 achievable outcomes, e.g. Prepare lesson plans with learning objectives
- Build on recognized staff strengths, e.g. Use knowledge of subject collection to develop course-appropriate learning outcomes
- Downplay weaker areas, e.g. Move from product-based teaching to linking products to curriculum
- Identify and secure resources to accomplish development objectives, e.g. Take advantage of existing teacher training programs (UTS)

Development model

- Identify achievable development outcomes.
- Identify and build on existing librarian strengths
- Identify and downplay/work with weaknesses
- Identify and secure resources to achieve outcomes

How do you measure success?

Not how close you are to the destination, but how far you are from the harbour



© BlueStarline, The Viking Fleet Page

<http://www.spp.k12.nf.ca/vikings/vikeboat.gif>



<http://www.nd.edu/~acasad/europe/images/roskilde-postcard.jpg>

Thank you!

