A guide to teaching information literacy: 101 practical tips,

Blanchett, H. et al, Facet, London

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This new book from Facet “does what it says on the tin”. For those involved in teaching information literacy it provides a great introduction to teaching and learning, and how to apply both of these in an Information Literacy setting. The authors are all practicing Information Professionals in the Universities sector, and bring a wealth of practical experience to the book. This is a book of three parts – the first section (entitled ‘Planning’) provides fifteen short (2-3 page) introductions to areas as diverse as ‘Training Needs Analysis (TNA)’, ‘Storyboards’, and ‘Social Learning’, and covers the whole range of pedagogic theories and processes that lay behind modern Learning and Teaching theory.

The second section of the book covers, perhaps, one of the most difficult areas for many Information Professionals - ‘Delivery’. Again using short introductions we are given information about ‘Body Language’, ‘Cultural Relevance’, ‘Jokes and Humour’, and a host of other subjects relevant to the actual delivery of Information Literacy sessions. Thus we find in ‘Managing Sessions – the Start’ that enthusiasm is key – “if you can’t sound interested then why should your learners be?”, and that you should always try and use the INTRO technique in a session – ‘include Interest, Need, Time, Relevance, Objectives’ – it doesn’t matter in which order they are there, as long as they are there! Each of the twenty-four short introductions is arranged as follows, the information, what the content is ‘Best For’, further information ‘+ More’, things to be mindful of ‘Watch Out’, and finally any References taken from the content.

The final (third) section of the book contains ‘Activities’, and gives a range of practical suggestions for fifty activities to be used in the training session. These are arranged alphabetically from ‘Action Learning’, through ‘Goldfish Bowl’ to ‘Worksheets’. The activities are again described in short ‘bite-sized’ chunks, using the same ‘Best for’, ‘+More’ and ‘Watch Out’ pointers. The activities listed involved both getting the learners to think, and to involve them with the session physically, for example the ‘Dividing the Dots’ activity encourages the them to move around the training area by displaying a range of options around the walls of the area, and giving the participants coloured sticky dots, by which they can ‘vote’ on their preferred options. Five dots per participant, 5-10 minute time limit, when completed you (as the trainer) can review the choices. The ‘Watch Out’ pointer suggests that some learners may be reluctant to participate, or may just try to divide the dots evenly!

In conclusion, this is a book that can be ‘dipped into’ if you are ever stuck for ideas for an Information Literacy/Study Skills teaching session. It gives you the pedagogic theory to back up the teaching delivery and activities, a range of delivery types to suit both beginners and experienced trainers, and a wide range of activities designed to encourage learning in differing learner groups.

4/5

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