

INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE ON INFORMATION
LITERACY
EXPECTED OUTCOMES
Revised Draft August 31, 2001

Prefatory note: *This is a working draft; comments and criticisms are invited and should be send to Patricia Breivik at the National Forum on Information Literacy, or Woody Horton at the U.S. National Commission on Libraries and Information Science.*

1. Consciousness-Raising

To significantly raise the level of worldwide awareness of the basic concept of information literacy, and why it is important, by bringing together at the international level invited individuals from key stakeholder groups to focus on the full range and wide variety of challenges facing the advancement of information literacy as a strategic Internet Age skill needed by all populations, charge experts and participants with preparing an action agenda, and widely publicizing the event, the results, and follow-on actions.

2. Consensus-Seeking for a Common Definition

To test for a "zone of consensus" as to how different countries, different cultures, different sectors, and different professional disciplines define, utilize and evaluate the effectiveness information literacy programs, projects, standards, and guidelines, with the objectives of (1) narrowing unnecessary differences across national, cultural, sectoral, and professional lines, and (2) maximizing and broadening shared commonalities, and thereby moving toward a more universal definition.

3. Two Stage Meeting

The larger international meeting would be preceded by a much smaller "Expert Meeting" of not more than 20 information literacy experts drawn from different countries, cultures, sectors, and disciplines. The smaller group would be charged with:

- Recommending a format for the larger conference, including questions of timing, venue, size, budgetary requirements, and so forth;
- Developing a program and meeting format for the larger meeting;
- Recommending keynote and other invited speakers;
- Recommending key themes and sub-themes; and
- Identifying key stakeholder groups which should be represented in both the planning and implementation of the larger meeting (e.g. policy-

makers, academic researchers, teachers, students, parents, associations, institutions at different levels, information literacy professionals, and so on).

The larger group, a mixture of theorists and practitioners, would be charged with:

- Interchanging invited selected worldwide experiences with the information literacy concept, emphasizing "first person, practical, replicable, and sustainable" case study examples, pilot examples, and grassroots initiatives;
- Identifying and prioritizing additional information literacy research needs and opportunities, both pure and applied, including volunteer individuals and institutions for research projects, case studies, pilot projects, and additional, more specialized and focused conferences addressing more detailed areas;
- Identifying, assessing, and prioritizing both internal and cross-national, cross-cultural, cross-sectoral, and cross-disciplinary barriers to extending the information literacy concept in various implementation contexts;
- Drawing attention to the importance of the information literacy concept by ensuring widespread international media coverage; and
- Identifying strategies and tactics for the various stakeholder groups to consider in order to explain, adapt, and implement the information literacy concept within their respective arenas.

4. The Stakes

The stakes involved in successfully explaining and effectively utilizing the information literacy throughout all nation-states, societies, populations, sectors, disciplines, and cultures are high:

- Ensuring that all elements of society are not only able to operate computers and utilize the Internet, but also understand why the skills in finding, organizing, evaluating, and utilizing data, information, and knowledge are critical to exploiting the full benefits of modern information technologies;
- Ensuring that both children and adults acquire the necessary skills to utilize the Internet efficiently and effectively for their personal, family, job-related, school-related as well as lifelong learning, and other needs;
- Ensuring that a country can compete effectively in the global and their regional and sub-regional marketplaces, and how information literacy skills can give developing countries a distinctive comparative advantage;

- Ensuring that educators incorporate information literacy tools, programs, and doctrinal materials, such as information literacy standards and guidelines, into their curricula;
- Ensuring that government and institutional policy-makers, as well as foundations, understand why adequate financial support is a critical success factor; and
- Ensuring that the disabled and disadvantaged populations can compete effectively with less disadvantaged peers;

5. Proactive Champions

A final outcome would be the identification of several proactive champions (both individuals and institutions) who/which would be prepared to take up the cause of information literacy at the international, regional, and national levels, and help mobilize and marshal public and private sector interests in advancing the concept worldwide.