Ignatian Pedagogy and the Information Search Process

In Spring 2009, several CPS faculty began an intensive process to develop online classes to be delivered in partnership with Gonzaga University's M.A. in Organizational Leadership. As the CPS library liaison, I joined the faculty in working through the CADE (Competency Assessment in Distributed Education) process with Kathleen Snyder, a representative from AJCU's JesuitNet. The first step is gaining a basic understanding of Ignatian Pedagogy, which embodies five key teaching elements—Context, Experience, Reflection, Action, and Evaluation.

Context - What needs to be known about learners (their environment, background, community, and potential) to teach them well?  
Experience - What is the best way to engage learners as whole persons in the teaching and learning process?  
Reflection - How may learners become more reflective so they more deeply understand what they have learned?  
Action - How do we compel learners to move beyond knowledge to action?  
Evaluation - How do we assess learners growth in mind, heart, and spirit?


This reminded me of work of Carol Kuhlthau and her model of the information search process: Initiation, Selection, Exploration, Formulation, Collection, Presentation, Assessment (Seeking meaning: a process approach to library and information studies, 2004). I began to wonder how the two systems might come together in the context of teaching information literacy in a Jesuit university setting.

As I worked with Joe Garity on preparing the Foreword Information Literacy classes, we had hoped to incorporate some of this thinking into the curriculum but found it too difficult to master in such a short time.

I'd like to spend my research leave exploring the concepts of Ignatian pedagogy through readings and interviews with members of the Jesuit community; investigating Kuhlthau's model; and reading recent research in the field of information and emotion (such as presented in Information and Emotion: the emergent affective paradigm in information behavior research and theory edited by Nahl and Bilal, 2007). My immediate goal is to infuse my teaching with a more Ignatian-based approach to research, with a longer range goal of developing an online resource for instruction librarians here and in the other AJCU (Association of Jesuit Colleges and Universities) institutions. I'd like to share my findings with the Reference and Regional staff in particular, but think the entire library might enjoy learning more about Ignatian pedagogy and would prepare a Town Hall presentation.

If I receive this leave time, I'll use the seven weeks in the summer when it is convenient for the Reference staff, ideally during July and early August.

Vicki Rosen  
September 1, 2009