

A Resource-Enriched Learning Model

In achieving technological and information literacy, the process becomes the product

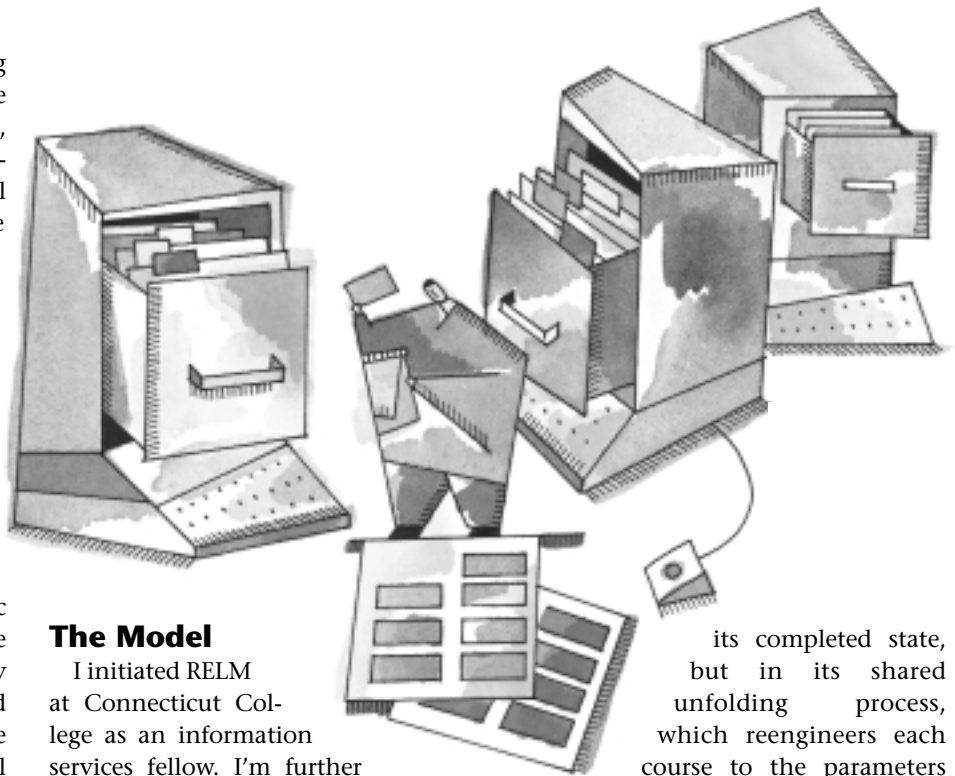
By **David R. Lavoie**

The Resource-Enriched Learning Model (RELM) addresses the individual interests of librarians, instructional technologists, and faculty. Working with the model requires these groups to collaborate to achieve their individual goals. The process results in a technological and information literacy infrastructure that is cooperative and emergent, from the inside out, rather than imposed from the top down.

Rationale

Librarians and other members of information services too often play a role parallel to the academic learning experience in a reactive general sense, rather than as key players in an activity-informed proactive sense. It's thus no surprise that many designs of technological and information literacy exist in a vacuum, detached from the assigned activities where they are relevant.

What's needed is service along a trajectory grounded in and woven into each activity, course, and curriculum of each department. To bring this about, faculty must become more clear, concise, and explicit about a course's objectives and the activities used to realize those goals. Only then can librarians and instructional technologists deftly select and provide those resources and services needed to pursue those activities.



The Model

I initiated RELM at Connecticut College as an information services fellow. I'm further developing it at the University of Connecticut–Storrs as an instructional developer for the university's Institute for Teaching and Learning. In its current form, RELM dovetails the individual efforts and interests of librarians, instructional technologists, and faculty, requiring their collaboration at the micro level to succeed in meeting their separate but overlapping goals. The process results in a technological and information literacy infrastructure. As an added benefit, the shared fulfillment of RELM's design begins to satisfy different learning styles. Yet, the strength of this model rests not in

its completed state, but in its shared unfolding process, which reengineers each course to the parameters established by the model.

This process progresses through the following steps:

1. Working closely with each faculty member for each course, helping the professor tease out the course's learning objectives and make them explicit
2. Choosing, and in some cases inventing, activities that will realize those learning objectives
3. Assembling service points and the specific resources, in as many formats as possible, around each and every activity module where they're relevant

4. Gathering all the links, references, and directions to those resources, service points, or people that someone may need — regardless of learning style — to successfully complete the activity, in order to then build the course online

Benefits of the Model

The model has three benefits:

1. It accommodates different learning styles.

For any activity, the student may choose from a diversity of resources relevant to its successful completion. For example, an activity that requires PowerPoint is supported with links, references, and directions to a PowerPoint workshop or an online, VHS, CD-ROM, or hard-copy tutorial. This lets the student select a preferred way of learning.

2. It provides a collaborative forum. RELM constructs a forum for collaboration among librarians, instructional technologists, faculty, and administra-

tors by pooling their unique goals and linking the success of each to the success of the others. For any activity requiring supplemental technological or bibliographic instruction, those who will provide it need to know the context in which the faculty expect it to be used and vice versa. For example, after a faculty member has designed an activity for students to use online newspapers to engage in comparative, international journalism, a librarian can offer a bibliographic instruction session focused on the delineation of the search parameters for those online newspapers.

3. It allows for the organic genesis of a technological and information literacy infrastructure on campus.

That is, the infrastructure grows out of a center where librarians, faculty, and instructional technologists share a stake in the success of all their respective activities. For example, one course may offer an activity that requires literacy with PowerPoint,

another with online newspapers, another with biographical materials, and so on. If each course is developed following the RELM process, a technological and information literacy infrastructure comes to exist. Admittedly, the process to fulfill RELM is initially time consuming, but it does gain momentum as group familiarity with the process burgeons. Yet, perhaps the best return for establishing this infrastructure is that it clearly provides a bulwark against the irresponsible integration of technology and the continued acontextual design of information literacy.

To date, this model has been used to completely redesign four courses. Readers interested in learning more about RELM may contact the author by e-mail. *e*

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