Information Literacy: The Library's Academic Program

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Presentation for AOC
Cheryl Truesdell
President Obama’s Declaration of National Information Literacy Month

Every day, we are inundated with vast amounts of information. A 24-hour news cycle and thousands of global television and radio networks, coupled with an immense array of online resources, have challenged our long-held perceptions of information management. Rather than merely possessing data, we must also learn the skills necessary to acquire, collate, and evaluate information for any situation...

An informed and educated citizenry is essential to the functioning of our modern democratic society, and I encourage educational and community institutions across the country to help Americans find and evaluate the information they seek, in all its forms.
Partnership for 21st Century Skills Report

People in the 21st century live in a technology and media-suffused environment, marked by various characteristics, including: 1) access to an abundance of information, 2) rapid changes in technology tools, and 3) the ability to collaborate and make individual contributions on an unprecedented scale. To be effective in the 21st century, citizens and workers must be able to exhibit a range of functional and critical thinking skills related to information, media and technology.
LEAP Essential Learning outcomes includes Intellectual and Practical Skills:

- Inquiry and analysis
- Critical and creative thinking
- Written and oral communication
- Quantitative literacy
- Information literacy
- Teamwork and problem solving

*Practiced extensively*, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance.
Maps information literacy concepts to all five of its areas of learning and to all levels of education from associate through master’s degrees.
IPFW Baccalaureate Framework
Acquisition of Knowledge

Students will demonstrate breadth of knowledge across disciplines and depth of knowledge in their chosen discipline. In order to do so, students must demonstrate the requisite information-seeking skills and technological competencies.
The amount of digital data available on the Web every day reaches records of mind-boggling proportions – now more than a zettabyte and presumably accumulating at an ever-increasing rate, estimated at 30% growth per year since 1999. (Blair, Ann “Information Overload, Then and Now” Chronicle of Higher Education, November 28, 2010)
What Do We Know about What Our Students Know about Information Literacy

1. The prevalence of Google in student research is well-documented. Current data show search engines are most used to find online content (93%) Google being the highest used among the brands. followed closely by Wikipedia (88%)
2. **Student research habits are worse than we thought.** The most alarming finding in the ERIAL studies was when it comes to finding and evaluating sources in the Internet age, students are downright lousy.
3. Students are clueless about how to build a search that would return good sources. They prefer simple searches using Google-Style ‘any word anywhere’ keyword as a default, and failed to narrow their search criteria at all.
4. Students struggle most with sorting through all they found, filtering relevant from non-relevant results. Even the most poorly constructed search in Google, etc. will return results, but deciding and prioritizing relevance is more complex and challenging. This may be the information literacy skill students lack the most.
What Do We Know about What Our Students Know about Information Literacy?

5. Undergraduates are not prepared adequately in any academic area but often arrive with strong convictions about their abilities. “College professors routinely encounter students who have never written anything more than short answers on exams, who do not read much at all, who lack foundational skills in [reading, writing,] math and science, yet are completely convinced of their abilities ...” *Academically Adrift*
What Can we Conclude from these Studies?

1. **Challenge the students:** Students whose classes reflect high expectations (more than 40 pages of reading a week and more than 20 pages of writing a semester) gained more than other students. *Academically Adrift*
What Can we Conclude from these Studies?

2. Don’t overestimate their abilities. For example, a professor might tell students to find “scholarly sources” without considering that students do not actually know what a “scholarly source” is.
What Can we Conclude from these Studies?

3. Integrate information management concepts and skills throughout the curriculum and link to an information need. Practiced extensively, across the curriculum, in the context of progressively more challenging problems, projects, and standards for performance [from LEAP].
What Can we Conclude from these Studies?

4. **Make it a team effort between faculty and librarians.** In its 2011 Report, *Redefining the Academic Library the University Part 1: Transformational Change in the Information Landscape*, the Education Advisory Board recommended embedding Librarians in online courses, departments, and research teams.
5. Keep it relevant, high-tech, interactive, and hands-on.

Course management systems provide a logical nexus for distributing and highlighting resources, tutorials, communiqúes, and other library assets. Library content that is pertinent, timely, focused on student assignments, and complementary to course learning outcomes should become the standard of service.
What Can we Conclude from these Studies

6. **Don’t fight it, Use it.** If students are confident about search engines, what are the best strategies to support and improve, not discourage, this self-service, self-assessment model of information literacy. If Wikipedia is a first step for most students, make Wikipedia part of their assignment.
IPFW Senate Library Subcommittee
Information Literacy Resolution

Be it resolved that:
The Senate adopt the information literacy competencies proposed to the IPFW Senate Library Subcommittee by the Information Literacy Task Force ...

And be it further resolved that:
The faculty be supported in efforts to work in partnership with Helmke Library librarians to develop programs and services that integrate information skills and concepts into required survey, research, and writing courses.