

Information Literacy Working Group Approved 4-06

Information Literacy enhances the pursuit of knowledge at the University by preparing students to think critically and use information effectively in their academic, professional, and personal lives. The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed, can locate it using a variety of media and technologies, and can evaluate information in order to use it proficiently.

- We believe that departmental faculty and library faculty share the responsibility for helping students develop information literacy skills.
- We believe that course-integrated instruction, connected with a real academic need, is more effective than stand-alone information literacy courses or disconnected tours and library orientations. Course-integrated information literacy instruction is customized to achieve the faculty member's course objectives.
- We believe in implementing Information Literacy Across the Curriculum (ILAC) similar to the concept of Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC).
- We believe in a planned curriculum with distinct, sequenced information literacy content that allows practice and reinforcement without duplication.

Learning Objectives:

An information-literate student at Eastern Connecticut State University is able to:

1. Define the task or research topic and determine the nature and extent of the information needed;
2. Develop and implement an effective search strategy appropriate for an information need;
3. Refine the necessary information effectively and efficiently;
4. Evaluate information and its sources critically and incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base and value system;
5. Assess the search strategy;
6. Employ principles consistent with the ethical and legal uses of information;
7. Effectively navigate the body of knowledge within his/her major discipline.
8. Organize, synthesize and communicate information; and
9. Apply these skills within his/her major discipline.

We propose an incremental approach; ideally, the first three steps occur during the student's first year at Eastern (or second, at the latest), in order for students to acquire research and critical thinking skills early in their academic career.

Step I: Liberal Arts Thematic Clusters (FYP)

During the freshman year, all students will attend an information literacy session during the Liberal Arts Thematic Clusters. The fifty-minute Information Literacy Scavenger Hunt is customized for each cluster. This active learning exercise includes a brief introduction to the Library web site, catalog, and databases. Students use the web site, the Reference Desk and 1st floor service desk to guide them in their search for books from the Reference collection, circulating books, an eBook, a current periodical, a bound journal, microfilm, microfiche and a video. Students bring back the items they find and demonstrate what tools they used to find their assigned materials. This session provides students with a more in-depth appreciation of the wide range of library resources and empowers them to use the Library with the help of the web site and the reference librarians.

Step II: English 100/200*

English 100/200 classes come to the Library as they begin to write papers. This session provides students with an introduction to finding journal articles in a full-text database. Students learn how to choose keywords for a given topic and revise those keywords if their search results prove insufficient or overwhelming. Students learn to differentiate between books and periodicals as well as popular and

scholarly periodicals. Students learn how to find a journal title using CONSULS and how to locate the article. Students learn how to print, save and e-mail their articles and where to find examples of MLA citations online.

Students are given an overview of plagiarism and resources to help them avoid plagiarism. In addition, students learn the advantages of using library databases, rather than the Web, and that the sole purpose of the Reference Desk is to help them with their research. Students select a PIN Code and learn how to access the databases from off-campus and how to reserve a book via CONSULS. Many English 100/200 classes elect to schedule a second, hands-on session that enables students to get research assistance for their individual topics from the librarian as well as their professor.

Step III: Information Literacy Tutorial

The Information Literacy Tutorial consists of two components:

1. a web-based, interactive information literacy tutorial, which allows students to proceed at their own pace, at any time, either at home or in the library.
2. a web and/or CD-based video demonstrating research techniques.

The tutorial and video comprise three modules that guide students to appropriate information resources and show them how to use those resources efficiently and effectively. While some of these lessons have been covered in class, the Information Literacy Tutorial insures that all students receive the same grounding in library research and serves as a reinforcement of prior learning. The tutorial would be introduced in English 100 and could easily be integrated into the IT requirement and completed in a computer lab.

Step IV: Major-Designated Classes*

Information literacy instruction for major-designated classes is the result of collaboration between the library faculty and the departmental faculty, directly related to the discipline, and more specifically, related to the particular assignment. The purpose of the library component will be to complement the goals and research assignments determined by the departmental faculty member. This segment would consume one or more class sessions. (Three hours is the anticipated time allowance to cover this content.)

Students will learn how to choose the correct database for their topic and be able to name two aspects of a database that are important to consider when using it (time period covered, type of periodicals covered, full-text/abstract only). Students will be able to construct a fairly sophisticated search strategy using at least two of the following: truncation, Boolean operators, synonyms, subject headings or controlled vocabulary. Students will learn that the same search in two different databases will generate two different sets of results. Students will learn about discipline-specific resources in the Reference Collection and core information sources for their discipline. Students will learn the difference between primary and secondary sources as defined by their discipline. Students will learn how to examine the bibliography, footnotes, and references sections of sources they find to locate additional sources of information on their topic.

Assessment

The Information Literacy Working Group proposed a trial of a new comprehensive exam from the Educational Testing Service (ETS). ETS recently launched the ICT (Information and Communication Technology) Literacy Assessment, a simulation-based testing program that measures students' ability to define, access, manage, integrate, evaluate, create and communicate information in a technological environment.

The test is an outgrowth of work done by an international panel of experts ETS convened three years ago to study the growing importance of existing and emerging information and communication technologies and their relationship to literacy. In developing this new test, ETS partnered with seven leading colleges

and universities to form the National Higher Education ICT Initiative. Guided by insights and exploration into information and technology literacy, the group identified the testing criteria for ICT Literacy Assessment.

***Faculty Development**

The Information Literacy team proposes to work with departmental faculty (preferably under the auspices of a Faculty Development grant) who wish to integrate information literacy into new or existing courses. Faculty who prefer to lead their own information literacy sessions will be supported by the Information Literacy team as needed.

Information Literacy in the Disciplines

“The *Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Instruction Section (IS) Teaching Methods Committee* has gathered links and citations to information literacy standards and curricula developed by accrediting agencies, professional associations, and institutions of higher education. The discipline titles below are based on the National Center for Education Statistic's *The Classification of Instructional Programs: 2000 Edition*. Each discipline is separated into two sections:

- 1) Standards or Guidelines from Accrediting Agencies & Professional Associations and
- 2) Curricula, Articles, and Presentations.

The resources listed were identified by contacting accrediting agencies, conducting literature reviews, and searching the web. Suggestions for additional materials that meet the criteria for inclusion may be submitted for consideration to the Chair of the IS Teaching Methods Committee at any time. The web site and criteria will be revised and updated by the Teaching Methods Committee annually before the ALA Annual Conference”

<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrlbucket/is/projectsacrl/infolitdisciplines/index.htm>