How do I integrate information literacy skills into my courses?

Examples of student outcomes are provided using the Association of College and Research Libraries' Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education. Review the outcomes for each objective and then brainstorm how to develop assignments to meet these objectives in your own courses. In addition, refer to the College of Arts & Sciences College Core Curriculum learning outcomes for information literacy. A list of suggested activities is included in this document.

Student competencies

1) Determines the nature and extent of the information needed

- Identifies concepts and terms to describe information need
- Develops a thesis statement and formulates questions based on the information need
- Constructs and uses effective search strategies
- Recognizes that knowledge can be organized into disciplines that influence the way information is accessed
- Identifies the purpose and audience of sources (popular vs. scholarly, current vs. historical)
- Differentiates between primary and secondary sources
- Revises or refines research question
- Recognizes that existing information can be combined with original thought, experimentation and/or analysis to produce new information

2) Accesses needed information effectively and efficiently

- Selects efficient and effective approaches for accessing information
- Develops an appropriate research plan
- Uses various systems and formats to retrieve information
- Identifies gaps and refines search strategy if necessary
- Creates a system for organizing information and uses various technologies to manage the selected information

3) Evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base
- Restates concepts from information source into his or her own words and selects the appropriate data
- Identifies material to be quoted
- Examines and compares information from a variety of sources in order to evaluate its reliability, accuracy, authority, currency, and point of view
- Analyzes the structure and logic of supporting arguments or methods
- Recognizes interrelationships among concepts and combines them into primary statements with supporting evidence
- Builds on synthesized ideas to construct new hypotheses
- Uses technologies and software (e.g. spreadsheets, multimedia) to study interaction of ideas
- Applying evaluation criteria, compares information identified from various sources for contradictions with prior knowledge
- Participates in electronic forums of discourse on a topic and seeks expert opinion through a variety of mechanisms (e.g. Course Management Systems such as Blackboard or Angel, email, listservs, interviews)
- Draws conclusions based on collected information

4) Individually, or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose

- Organizes information to support purpose of project
- Identifies appropriate medium and format to communicate results of project
- Integrates new and prior information, including quotations and paraphrasings, to support purpose of project
- Uses a range of technology applications in creating project
- Clearly communicates the purpose of their project to their intended audience
- Maintains a log of activities related to project

5) Understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and access and uses information ethically and legally

- Identifies and discusses issues relating to privacy, security, censorship, intellectual property, academic integrity and access to information
• Uses appropriate documentation styles for citing sources

• Complies with university policies on access to information sources

• Demonstrates an understanding of what constitutes plagiarism and does not represent the work of others as one's own

This list of competencies is adapted from the American Library Association's *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (2000).

**Assignment suggestions to develop competencies**

• Assign a research problem for students to solve and then have them explain their methodology to solve the problem to the class.

• Ask students to compare the difference between a popular and scholarly work in a specific discipline.

• Ask students to critique questionable sources of objective information, such as a tabloid news article or a biased Web site.

• Have students discuss the differences among various Web search engines (underlying structure of database, search interface, retrieval results).

• Have students use a resource in paper and then in electronic format. Students should discuss the pros and cons of using the resource in different formats. How were they similar? How did they differ?

• Ask students to perform a search using a Web search engine (such as Google) and a library database (such as Academic OneFile) for information resources on a topic. Next have them prepare a description of the resources available through the two tools, and discuss how the tools are similar and different.

• Ask students to prepare an annotated bibliography on an assigned topic. Entries should be properly cited, and students should explain how and where they obtained the information and evaluate its credibility and usefulness.

• Have students develop a logical plan to retrieve information in a variety of formats, then retrieve and evaluate the information, and present their findings to the class.

• Have students construct a timeline or map that illustrates the influence of a particular piece of published research and then summarize the relationship of the original research with what followed.

• Stage a debate with pro and con panels. Have students investigate an issue and obtain relevant materials to support their position on the issue.
• Assign an article that presents the results of research and includes statistical data. Ask students to discuss the research methodology used and evaluate the results as presented by the author(s).

• Review plagiarism cases in the news, such as popular historians Doris Kearns Goodwin and Stephen Ambrose, or journalist Jayson Blair, and ask students to retrieve and summarize articles about the cases. Have them tell you whether or not they agree with any sanctions against the accused authors.

*Adapted from University of Maryland information literacy resources*