

Randall Library's Instructional Services

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It is assumed that most traditional college students are “**computer literate**,” having grown up using a computer.

They are **not, however, “information literate.”** The ability to “point and click” and “surf the web” does not correlate with **learning to distinguish between subscription resources and the World Wide Web, scholarly journal articles from newspaper articles, or credible information from inappropriate information.**

Currently, there is no Information Literacy requirement at UNCW. Library instruction is “hit or miss.” Some English instructors may request library instruction while others may not. Some research methods courses require library instruction while others may not. Freshman Seminar (UNI 101) requires library instruction but Freshman Seminar is NOT a required course for UNCW students. Transfer students do not have a required library instruction session unless it is offered in one of their courses upon transfer to UNCW. Most faculty assume students are getting research skills “somewhere else” whether it is assumed they come into college with these skills or it is a skill they acquire through basic studies.

Unfortunately, **some UNCW students are NEVER exposed to the library or the library's resources.**

An explanation of these issues from a faculty perspective can be found in the article, “It’s the Information Age, So Where’s the Information? Why Our Students Can’t Find It and What We Can Do to Help,” by Jill D. Jenson (*College Teaching*, 2004, 52 (3), 107 – 112).

Statistics: AY 2005 – 2006

- 718 instruction sessions offered (including 240 one-on-one sessions with librarians)
- Not all sessions offered had attendees
- 8,745 people received instruction (UNCW students, faculty, staff; outside groups; area high school students, etc.)

Library Faculty and Facilities:

- 8 librarians responsible for instruction for all academic disciplines
- 1 dedicated room for library instruction (20 computers)
- 1 multi-purpose room available for library instruction (20 computers)
- Librarians will come to your classroom for larger groups

What We Offer:

Clinics

Course-Related Instruction (52% of instruction for AY 2005 – 2006)

- Focused for the students taking a course; teaches aspects of library use and the resources needed to accomplish a specific assignment for the course; supports the objectives of the course but does not constitute an integral part of the course

LIB 101: Introduction to Information Literacy (1 credit hour)

LIB 103: Introduction to Library Research and Technology (3 credit hours)

One-On-One Sessions

Ten-Minute Sessions

Tours

UNI 101 (UNI 101 has a required library session each fall semester)

Workshops

Future?

Course-Integrated Instruction

- Teaching the use of the library and the library's resources as an integral part of the objectives of the course; considered essential for the student to learn and be tested on both their understanding of the course concepts and their ability to successfully complete library-related assignments

Information Literacy

- The set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information. Information literacy is more closely tied to course-integrated instruction but it extends far beyond coordination between the librarian and the individual faculty member. There is much more to information literacy competence than library-related research. Students must demonstrate competencies in formulating research questions and in their ability to use information as well as an understanding of ethical and legal issues surrounding information. This requires a campus culture of collaboration and focus on student learning. (More information below)

Suggestions for Faculty/Librarian Collaboration for Productive Library Assignments

Modified from: <http://www.hccfl.edu/facultyinfo/aellison/productivelinks.html> (Alicia B. Ellison, 2004)

What are the reasons for requiring a paper or project that requires library research?

- To promote information literacy in students.
- To prepare students to be lifelong learners in an information economy.
- To provide students with an opportunity to navigate various types of information sources, in various formats.
- To teach students how to evaluate, think critically about, and apply the content that they find in these information sources.
- To reinforce and supplement course content.
- To encourage students to engage with ideas and construct their own learning.

Librarians are your colleagues and partners in education

- Library Science is a discipline.
- Librarians know how information is produced and packaged and where to find it.
- Librarians are trained to connect information seekers with the material they want or need. Librarians know how to find appropriate and credible information.
- Librarians want to collaborate with you and to help your students succeed.

Schedule a library instruction session for your class

- Work with the librarian to make the session assignment-specific.
- Assign your students a graded task that will require them to immediately use the knowledge and skills learned, i.e. finding a source that they will use in their paper and justifying their selection of that source.
- Prepare the class - tell your students that they will be going to the library. Explain the research assignment to them before the session. They will be more "primed" to pay attention during the session.
- One 50-minute session is unfortunately not enough time to skim over the basics of where things are located in the library or the mechanics of accessing a database. If you can, work with the librarian to schedule more than one session to cover different resources, topics, and skills. If class time does not permit this, consider asking the librarian to meet with students outside of class time.
- When possible, attend library sessions with your students. More of your students will attend the library session, and they will get more out of it, if you are present.
- Students are accountable to you, not to the librarian, for their grade.
- You can provide course-related context to a principle or resource covered by the librarian.
- Your presence validates the importance of information literacy (conversely, your absence sends the opposite message).

Avoid scavenger hunts

- This is a common assignment, but it is an exercise in futility. Students learn little from it, and mostly become frustrated and more averse to the library and "real" research than they may already be. Library staff often end up doing most of the work.
- "Roaming around the library looking for trivia is not research and tends to promote learned helplessness." - Lane Community College Library

When giving a library research assignment:

- Plan it well to achieve specific learning objectives as you do with any other component of your lesson plan.
- Be aware of the rapid changes in library technology. Asking a student to use a print index because you are more familiar with that tool will not help students improve their research skills.
- Be explicit when using directions like, "Do not use the web." Often students will assume this statement means that they are not "allowed" to use full-text databases when many relevant resources are **only** available through one of the library's electronic resources.
- Provide the library with a copy of your assignment. This will help librarians at the Reference Desk if students seek help after the library session and do not have their assignment with them.
- Your students will better learn course content, and improve their information literacy skills, if you try the following:
 - "Test-drive" your assignment. Is it doable? Is the information really there? Try these strategies to encourage real learning:
 - Refer your students to specific websites, providing navigating instructions, so that they can find information that you know is there. An open-ended assignment, in which students are told to simply "go on the Internet and find," usually causes them to waste time, learn little, and become frustrated.
 - Remember that web-based information can often change or go away - check your sources often.
 - Assign a task referring students to one or more specific reference sources that you know are in the library, with instructions to look up a topic that you know is in the index, e.g. "Source: Encyclopedia of African-American Culture and History. Call # REF E185.E54 1996. Topic: Jim Crow."
 - Similarly, if your assignment calls for students to look up articles in specific journals related to your discipline, consult with the librarian about which of these journals are available in full-text in the library's databases, and indicate this in your assignment, e.g. "You may access full-text articles from these journals in the XXX database, available through the library's website, <http://library.uncw.edu>. See a librarian for help," (or some other effective instruction that you and the librarian devise)

Ask the librarian to review with you what resources are available

- There may not be a sufficient number of circulating books available for everyone in the class to check out. If your research assignment requires your entire class to use one resource, chances are that resource will “disappear” or will be damaged and few students will be able to complete the assignment.
- Consider placing items on reserve. Articles can be made available electronically through electronic reserves.
- Discuss with the librarian reference books, e-books, databases, and other useful sources besides circulating books that may be available.
- You may be surprised to learn a thing or two about sources. There is more to the "online" world than just the free Web. For example, instructors often give their students the URL for a newspaper or magazine web site, with the instruction to locate articles there. What the instructors don't realize is: These sites usually allow users to search for articles but the articles themselves, or most of them, are not available for free.
- The library subscribes to databases that provide full-text access to articles from many different periodicals. These databases are accessible outside the library and off-campus for UNCW students, faculty, and staff.
- The librarian may be able to suggest quality web sites that relate to your curriculum, or a specialized topic, i.e. plagiarism, that you can share with your students.

Suggest items for purchase

- It may not help for the current assignment, but your library colleagues want to hear from you - the subject expert - any suggestions for books (except textbooks!), DVDs, videos, journal subscriptions, and other materials that the library should consider purchasing to support your curriculum.

“Information Literacy” – Information for Faculty

Modified from: <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlinfolit/informationliteracy.htm>
 Created by the American Library Association's Association for College and Research Libraries (ACRL)

What Is Information Literacy?

There are many different definitions of information literacy (also called information competency or information fluency by some practitioners) because the term is often confused with computer literacy and library instruction. While there is a great deal of overlap among the three terms, information literacy is the more comprehensive. Perhaps the best succinct and comprehensive definition is:

- "The ability to locate, evaluate, and use information to become independent life-long learners" - Commission on Colleges, Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Criteria for Accreditation, Section 5.1.2 [Library and Other Information Resources] Services. 10th ed. Dec. 1996.

In the succinctness and breadth of the above definition much of the substance of information literacy is lost. Therefore a more comprehensive definition is useful. Jeremy J. Shapiro and Shelley K. Hughes provide a more detailed definition in their article "Information Literacy as a Liberal Art." Briefly put Shapiro and Hughes make the following major points in their definition:

- In its narrowest sense information literacy includes the practical skills involved in effective use of information technology and information resources, either print or electronic.
- Information literacy is a new liberal art which extends beyond technical skills and is conceived as the critical reflection on the nature of information itself, its technical infrastructure and its social, cultural and even philosophical context and impact.
- The information literacy curriculum includes:

- **Tool literacy** - The ability to use print and electronic resources including software.
- **Resource literacy** - The ability to understand the form, format, location and access methods of information resources.
- **Social-structural literacy** - Knowledge of how information is socially situated and produced. It includes understanding the scholarly publishing process.
- **Research literacy** - The ability to understand and use information technology tools to carry our research including discipline-related software.
- **Publishing literacy** - The ability to produce a text or multimedia report of the results of research.
- Perhaps the most complete definition of information literacy is provided by Loanne Snavely and Natasha Cooper in a review article for the *Journal of Academic Librarianship* entitled "The Information Literacy Debate" (January 1997). The article is most useful because it puts the current definitional debate in the context of the 100 year history of librarians' efforts to provide programs that develop students' information searching skills.

What should faculty and administrators know about information literacy programs?

If you are an academic administrator or faculty member who is somewhat unfamiliar with information literacy, the following points of information and advice may be useful:

Not A New Concept

Information literacy may be a "hot" new term in the higher education lexicon as we talk about living in the Information Age. However it is not a new concept. The idea of resource-based education is an old one and librarians have been involved in teaching the effective use of information resources for over a century under the labels library instruction, bibliographic instruction, and library skills.

Clarifying The Term

The terms "resource-based education," "bibliographic instruction," "library instruction," "computer literacy," among others will often be used in conjunction with the term "information literacy." Sorting out the differences can be useful but is not essential to understanding the basic concept of "evaluate, and use information to become independent life-long learners." Information literacy includes both a set of generic skills and concepts as well as skills and concepts which are specific to certain disciplines and subject areas.

Information literacy programs take two archetypical forms -- separate courses (for credit or non-credit) or activities integrated into general education courses and/or courses in major fields of study.

Collaboration

Information literacy depends on collaboration among classroom faculty, academic administrators, librarians and other information professionals. In order to effectively implement a program all parties must be involved.

Leadership of Administrators

Information literacy programs require the leadership and support of academic administrators. Such leadership is not limited to budgetary support. It also includes helping create a supportive atmosphere and practical opportunities for cooperation among librarians, classroom faculty and information technologists. Such leadership should promote a vision of liberal education as an empowering and transforming endeavor that develops students as independent learners with the necessary skills.

Your Librarians

Librarians are deeply involved in addressing the issues associated with developing information literacy programs and national and regional efforts to improve program quality. Consult with your librarians.

Are there some model programs I can examine?

- Drew Smith's "Directory of Online Resources for Information Literacy," lists examples of information literacy programs in higher education (URL: <http://bulldogs.tlu.edu/mdibble/doril/>)