Integrating ACRL Information Literacy Standards into Classroom Instruction

Information literacy, or transliteracy, is the ability to recognize when information is needed and to locate, evaluate, and efficiently use information across platforms and technologies. (American College and Research Libraries - ACRL). Developing strong information literacy skills enables students to succeed in their academic and professional careers.

University writing is expected to be refined, thoroughly researched using various tools, and attributed. Students will be asked to write summaries, prepare arguments, or develop an interpretive work. Adding just one requirement for written work can satisfy one or more Information Literacy competency and proficiency standards.

Instructors can integrate elements of information literacy (transliteracy) into their classes in various ways. The following are examples of:

- general activities and exercises adaptable across subjects
- subject specific assignments with re-wording to integrate information literacy (transliteracy)
- lecture, presentation, writing, discussion activities mapped to standards and learning outcomes

In-class Activities and Exercises

1) Following an in-class discussion of research assignments, students:
   - Develop a topic sentence and search statement for a database that addresses the topic in their paper/project. The work is turned in before leaving class and returned to the students at the next class or by email with librarian comments and suggestions.
   - Select the best database for each group member’s topic and describe why it was the first choice.
   - Use a topic selected by the librarian and see how the search strategies vary from group to group.
   - Evaluate a sample search provided by the librarian, looking at the first 10 articles on the result list. What is in the result list? What is missing? Students then give ideas on how to improve the results or cover different aspects of the topic.
   - Include an analysis of how they incorporated and located multiple perspectives on a topic (as part of a paper). 2) Test/quiz question:
     - Explain some of the criteria you used in evaluating sources for the research papers in this course.

3) Student self-assessment:
   - What are the important parts of this research assignment? How well have I done this? How do I know?
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- Describe the 3-5 most important things you learned about: a) the research process, while doing this assignment; and b) yourself as a researcher, while doing this assignment
- Briefly describe the assignment. What was it about? Give 1 or 2 examples of your most successful research techniques or finds. Explain what made them successful or good.
- Give 1 or 2 examples, if relevant, of less successful research techniques or sources. What makes you say they are less successful? The next time you confront a similar situation, what, if anything, could you do differently to increase your learning, research methods and productivity?
- Looking at the criteria for information competency, which of these would you say you have accomplished through this assignment? Briefly explain why and how.

Classroom Lecture Format

These are suggestions for exercises mapped to Information Literacy (transliteracy) competencies in the context of classroom instruction.

Require students to:

- Create a concept map of the main lecture concepts, ideas, or information
- Write a one-minute or 300-word evaluation of what they learned from the class or lecture and present to peers or hand-in to instructor for review
- Research and critically evaluate outside resources on the lecture topic in the subject area.

Standard Introduced and/or Reinforced

**Standard Two:** The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.

Learning Outcomes (1 a - d; 3 a)

- constructs and implements effective search strategies
- retrieves relevant information using a variety of resources (electronic or print)
- selects the most appropriate methods or tools for finding information

**Standard Three:** The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

Learning Outcomes (1 a; 2 a):

- assesses the usefulness and relevance of the information obtained
- defines and applies criteria for evaluating information
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• examines and compares information from various sources to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, etc.

Text-based Format

These are suggestions for exercises mapped to Information Literacy (transliteracy) competencies in the context of text-based instruction.

Require students to:

• Choose relevant readings from books (print or electronic)
• Write a summary or create a concept map of main ideas
• Email summary of reading to you, the instructor, or to a classmate for peer review. (Alternative: set-up collaborative workspace in an online social networking environment)
• Use a class blog or BlackBoard discussion area to post summaries of reading, including correct citations
• Find reading from the library databases
• Locate and evaluate resources that provide background information (encyclopedias, handbooks, dictionaries), print or electronic

Standard Introduced and/or Reinforced

**Standard One:** The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed.

Learning Outcomes (1 a, e, f; 4 a, b):

• defines and articulates the information need
• understands the purpose, scope and appropriateness of a variety of information sources
• re-evaluates the nature and extent of the information need
• uses diverse sources of information to inform decisions

**Standard Two:** The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.

Learning Outcomes (1 a - d; 2 a - f; 4 a):
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- constructs and implements effective search strategies
- retrieves relevant information using a variety of resources (electronic or print)
- selects the most appropriate methods or tools for finding information
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Discussion Format

These are suggestions for exercises mapped to Information Literacy (transliteracy) competencies in the context of discussions or seminars as class or course design.

Require students to:

- post a response to the appropriate Blackboard discussion
- locate and accurately cite 2 or 3 sources in support of their response

Standard Introduced and/or Reinforced

**ACRL Standard Two:** *The information literate person finds needed information effectively and efficiently.*

Learning Outcomes (2.2 a,b):

- constructs and implements effective search strategies
- retrieves relevant information using a variety of resources (electronic or print)
- selects the most appropriate methods or tools for finding information

**ACRL Standard Three:** *The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.* Learning Outcomes (3.6 a,b):

- assesses the usefulness and relevance of the information obtained
- defines and applies criteria for evaluating information
- reflects on the information seeking process and revises search strategies as necessary

**Standard Five:** *The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.*

Learning Outcomes (5.2 a):

- participates in electronic discussions following accepted practices
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Writing Assignments

Below are suggestions for exercises mapped to Information Literacy (transliteracy) competencies in the context of assignments and exercises requiring students to submit written work.

Require students to:

- submit an annotated bibliography for preview well in advance of paper/assignment due date; submit initially to a subject librarian in draft form for assessment
- include resources from a wide variety of sources

Standard Introduced and/or Reinforced

**Standard Two:** *The information literate person finds needed information effectively and efficiently.*

Learning Outcomes (1 a; 3 a):

- constructs and implements effective search strategies
- retrieves relevant information using a variety of resources (electronic or print)
- selects the most appropriate methods or tools for finding information

**Standard Three:** *The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.*

Learning Outcomes (2 a; 4 a, f):

- assesses the usefulness and relevance of the information obtained
- defines and applies criteria for evaluating information
- reflects on the information seeking process and revises search strategies as necessary

**Standard Five:** *The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.*

Learning Outcomes (3 a, b):

- conforms with conventions and etiquette related to access to, and use of, information
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- legally obtains, stores, and disseminates text, data, images, or sounds

Presentation Format

Below are suggestions for exercises mapped to Information Literacy (transliteracy) competencies in the context of presentation-based instruction.

Require student to:

- use both primary and secondary sources
- use text, graphics, and media
- use presentation software (PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.)
- provide background readings for peer review one week prior to presentation
- work in a group to create presentation
- locate, evaluate, and correctly document all information sources

Standard Introduced and/or Reinforced

ACRL Standard Two: The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.

Learning Outcomes (2.1-3):

- selects the most appropriate methods or tools for finding information
- constructs and implements effective search strategies
- obtains information using appropriate methods

ACRL Standard Three: The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

Learning Outcomes (3.5 a, b):

- compares and integrates new understandings with prior knowledge to determine the
- value added, contradictions, or other unique characteristics of the information
- communicates knowledge and new understandings effectively
Standard Five: The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.

Learning Outcomes (5.2, a: 5.3 a, b):
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conforms with conventions and etiquette related to access to, and use of, information legally obtains, stores, and disseminates text, data, images, or sounds

Subject Specific Assignment Suggestions

Nursing

**Original Assignment:** Students discuss criteria of appropriate information for a patient vs. themselves on an emerging health issue.

**Restructured:** Students find one article on a health or immune system topic that would be useful for themselves as professionals, and one on the same topic that would be useful for a patient. Compare and contrast the two sources and explain why they are a good choice for each group.

100 Level Humanities Class

**Original Assignment:** Students submitted bibliographies that documented their sources for their paper/project/assignment.

**Restructured:** Students submit a topic worksheet and bibliography to the library faculty member. The worksheet documents their vocabulary, topic development and rationale for selecting the resources they did, including why the resources are scholarly enough to meet the requirements of the assignment. Topic is approved by the course instructor only after approval from the librarian. Worksheet becomes part of the grade for the paper/project/assignment.

**Adapted from:** Gilchrist, Debra. ALA Conference Presentation Midwinter 2000. Amended March, 2010.

Any course (Sciences or Humanities)

Require students to:

- submit an annotated bibliography for preview well in advance of paper/assignment due date; submit initially to a subject librarian in draft form for assessment
- include resources from a wide variety of sources

**Standard Introduced and/or Reinforced**
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Standard Two: The information literate person finds needed information effectively and efficiently.

Learning Outcomes (1 a; 3 a):

- constructs and implements effective search strategies
- retrieves relevant information using a variety of resources (electronic or print)
- selects the most appropriate methods or tools for finding information

Standard Three: The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

Learning Outcomes (2 a; 4 a, f):

- assesses the usefulness and relevance of the information obtained
- defines and applies criteria for evaluating information
- reflects on the information seeking process and revises search strategies as necessary

Standard Five: The information literate student understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally.

Learning Outcomes (3 a, b):

- conforms with conventions and etiquette related to access to, and use of, information
- legally obtains, stores, and disseminates text, data, images, or sounds

Research Assignments

While not all university courses require students to complete a research paper, most require students to effectively research their topic.

Librarians can work with you to plan assignments which make good use of Library resources and to present Information Literacy (Transliteracy) instruction for your courses.

While the traditional research paper is still a commonly-used assignment, there are a variety of alternatives.
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Instructors may choose to create and use alternative research assignments designed to integrate a research component in a course with the aim to provide scaffolding feedback and help students avoid plagiarism. Some instructors add assignments leading up to the final research paper that allow students to receive feedback on every stage of the research process.

Ideas include:

- Search log
- Annotated bibliography

In other instances, instructors choose to move away from traditional entirely from the requirement to write a paper. Ideas include:

- Podcast
- Mock conference presentation
- Debate
- Promotional video

Check out these websites for other ideas and examples:

- Tutorial for Developing and Evaluating Assignments from University of Maryland University College
- Ideas for Library/Information Assignments from Memorial University Libraries
- Designing Assignments to Develop Information Literacy Skills from Drew University
- 10 Sample Assignments from Ohio University Libraries
- Ideas for Library Related Assignments from The Collins Memorial Library at University of Puget Sound
- Alternatives to the Research Paper from the University of Texas at Austin