



Information Literacy and Higher Education

04/08/2009



Presentation Outline

- **Defining Information Literacy**
- **Information Literacy Education**
- **Teaching Information Literacy**
- **Getting it Right - Assessment and Evaluation**



ALA Definition of Information Literacy

“To be information literate, a person must be able to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information.”

American Library Association. Presidential Committee on Information Literacy. Final Report. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1989).

<http://www.ala.org/acrl/nili/ilit1st.html>



Why is Information Literacy important?

- **Equips individuals for lifelong learning**
- **More than knowing how to use computers**
- **Includes critical reflection of information**
- **Highlights the global nature of information**
- **Allows use of relevant information for informed decision making**



What are the skills needed to be information literate?

- **Ability to recognize when information is needed**
- **Know where and how to discover the needed information**
- **Are comfortable using a variety of tools to find, modify and assimilate the information**
- **Critically evaluate and synthesize the information**



Responsibility for Information Literacy Education

- **Shared responsibility of all educators and information providers**
- **Requires collaboration of faculty and librarians**
- **Must be integrated into courses at all levels to provide reinforcement of skills**



Why integrate Information Literacy into the curriculum?

- **Information literacy is a process, not a discrete set of skills**
- **Information literacy represents a shift in thinking and it must be reinforced**
- **Information literacy is valuable to creating a successful workforce**



Strategies for Information Literacy Education

“What is called for is not a new information studies curriculum but, rather, a restructuring of the learning process. Textbooks, workbooks and lectures must give way to a learning process based on information resources available for learning and problem solving throughout people’s lifetimes...(ALA, 1989, p.7)”



Teaching Information Literacy

- **Resource-based learning (Active Learning)**
- **Team-based learning**
- **Activities that stimulate critical thinking**
- **Requires collaboration between faculty and librarians**



Techniques for Teaching Information Literacy

- **Emphasizes the inquiry approach to learning**
- **Includes higher order tasks such as analysis, synthesis, evaluation and reflection**
- **Professor acts as facilitator**
- **Motivates students to participate**



Techniques, cont.

- **Students produce results such as a web page or publication rather than a paper**
- **Learning emphasizes teamwork over individual performance**



Benefits

- **Prepares students for lifelong learning**
- **Allows students to achieve academic success through provisions of different learning styles**



Faculty-Librarian Collaboration

- **Collaboration is essential because of the vast amount of information resources available today**
- **Collaboration takes many forms**



Examples of Collaborative Projects

- **Earlham College**
- **Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis**
- **University of Washington**
- **Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University**



Getting it Right - Assessment

- **Sample assessment techniques include:**
 - **Research journal**
 - **Research portfolio**
 - **Annotated bibliography**
 - **Essay examination**
 - **Self-assessment**



Getting it Right - Evaluation

- **Is the development of information skills identified in learning objectives?**
- **Does the curriculum ensure progressive development of increasingly sophisticated information skills?**
- **Is information literacy widely encouraged in the early years of undergraduate study as well as later?**



Evaluation, cont.

- **Do teaching and learning strategies encourage regular use of information skills?**
- **To what extent are students required to identify their own learning resources?**