Information Literacy Student Learning Goals

Musselman Library, Gettysburg College | March 2017

In our quickly changing, dynamic, and often uncertain information environment, information literacy (IL) skills are essential for success in the academic, personal, and future professional lives of Gettysburg College students. In collaboration with teaching faculty, librarians at Musselman Library serve as active partners in the development of these necessary skills through one-on-one interactions with students at the research help desk, individual research consultations, and course-integrated IL instruction.

Our IL instruction program is informed by the Association of College and Research Libraries' *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*, which has defined information literacy as: "…the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning."[1]

The foundations of our IL instruction program support the stated curricular goals of the College – in particular, the Effective Communication requirement of the Gettysburg College Curriculum, which states that Gettysburg College students should develop "…proficiency in writing, reading, and the use of electronic media. Central to these skills is the ability to articulate questions clearly, identify and gain access to appropriate kinds of information, construct cogent arguments, and engage in intellectual and artistic expression."[2]

The Foundations of Musselman Library's Information Literacy Program

- Student learning goals for information literacy are interconnected with the College's curricular goals.
- Information literacy is an integral part of both academic and "everyday life" research.
- Information literacy instruction and any subsequent activity must help to realize faculty learning goals at the course and department levels.
- Students should be given sequential opportunities to learn new information literacy abilities, to practice them, to reinforce them, and ultimately to master them.
- Above all, we emphasize the teaching of concepts over skills as a means to achieve our mission of educating information literate lifelong learners.

Information Literacy and Gettysburg College Students

The student learning goals for information literacy are informed by the six frames of the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. At Gettysburg, we have articulated five interrelated core information literacy concepts for our students: **scholarship as conversation**, **research as inquiry**, **authority is constructed and contextual**, **information creation as a process**, and **information has value**. Student learning outcomes are identified under each concept. Rather than being prescriptive, these are meant to develop wider conversations on our campus about student learning and to provide a starting point when designing instruction sessions with librarians, assignments, and courses.

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[1] Association of College and Research Libraries, *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education*. Chicago: ACRL, 2015, http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework
[2] Gettysburg College, *The Gettysburg Curriculum: Effective Communication Goal*, 2017, http://www.gettysburg.edu/academics/gettysburg_curriculum/requirements.dot

Scholarship as Conversation

Communities of scholars, researchers, or professionals engage in sustained discourse with new insights and discoveries occurring over time as a result of varied perspectives and interpretations.

By the end of the FY, a student should be able to:	The intermediate student should be able to:	The graduating senior should be able to:
• Understand that scholarship is a conversation in which meaning is created and debated by information creators and consumers over time • Understand that an issue/topic may be represented by multiple perspectives and approaches • Recognize a scholarly, peer-reviewed article and identify its key components • Provide attribution to relevant previous research	• Describe the contribution of information sources and varying perspectives to a disciplinary conversation • Engage with information in ways that demonstrate critical thinking and new understanding • Recognize that information may be perceived differently based on the format in which it is presented	• Understand role as a contributor to a scholarly conversation rather than simply as a consumer • Recognize that participation in a scholarly conversation is impacted by power and authority structures, prioritizing certain voices and perspectives • Contribute to a scholarly conversation at an appropriate level and venue (e.g., undergraduate research journal article, poster presentation, etc.)

Research as Inquiry

Research is iterative and depends upon asking increasingly complex or new questions whose answers in turn develop additional questions or lines of inquiry in any field. Searching for information is often nonlinear, requiring the evaluation of a range of information sources and the mental flexibility to pursue alternate avenues as new understanding develops.

By the end of the FY, a student should be able to:	The intermediate student should be able to:	The graduating senior should be able to:
• Recognize that research is an iterative process that requires persistence, adaptability, and flexibility • Develop research question(s) based on curiosity, information gaps, and/or conflicting information • Construct a foundational knowledgebase while searching on a new or unfamiliar topic • Develop an effective search by identifying key concepts/terms and employing various strategies to broaden/narrow search results (Boolean operators, search filters, etc.) • Distinguish among information search tools (MUSCAT, article databases, Google Scholar, etc.) • Determine how to access an item by using various retrieval systems (e.g., call numbers, interlibrary loan, Gett IT, etc.)	• Effectively apply advanced search skills within disciplinary search tools, including specialized subject headings or facets • Evaluate information and explore multiple perspectives while maintaining an open mind and critical stance • Identify information gaps or weaknesses and refine search strategies as necessary • Understand the interdisciplinary nature of research and how it impacts search strategies • Create or utilize a system for organizing and managing information sources • Articulate how information decisions/choices are made	• Determine an appropriate scope of investigation and apply advanced research strategies for the need, context, and type of inquiry • Determine comprehensiveness of results by questioning the limits of search tools or strategies • Interpret, analyze, and synthesize information in order to form new knowledge

Authority is Constructed and Contextual

Information sources reflect their creators' expertise and credibility. Sources should be evaluated based on the information need, the context in which the information was created, and how the information will be used. Authority is constructed in that various communities may recognize different types of authority. It is contextual in that the information need may help to determine the level of authority required.

By the end of the FY, a student should be able to:	The intermediate student should be able to:	The graduating senior should be able to:
• Examine and compare information from various sources in order to evaluate accuracy, authority, currency, and point of view • Understand the peer review process and how it impacts scholarly research	• Identify indicators of authority recognized by disciplines, professions, and communities of practice • Develop a self-awareness of personal bias and worldview and understand how that influences information interpretation • Recognize the cultural, physical, or other context within which information is created and how that context impacts interpretation	• Investigate differing viewpoints encountered in the literature and determine whether or not to incorporate or reject these ideas • Develop own authoritative voice in a particular area and understand the responsibilities this entails, including seeking accuracy and crediting the ideas of others • Understand the traditional notions of authority within a discipline and seek underrepresented voices

Information Creation as a Process

Information in any format is produced to convey a message and is shared via a selected delivery method. The iterative processes of researching, creating, revising, and disseminating information vary, and the resulting product reflects these differences.

By the end of the FY, a student should be able to:	The intermediate student should be able to:	The graduating senior should be able to:
• Distinguish among types of sources (e.g., books, journal articles, primary and secondary sources, scholarly and popular sources, etc.) • Understand that information sources may be perceived differently based on their format • Recognize that knowledge can be organized into disciplines that influence the way information is discovered and accessed	• Recognize that the information creation process may result in a range of information formats that vary by discipline • Select appropriate format (e.g., academic paper, digital project, poster, presentation) to communicate information based on audience and purpose • Understand copyright as an author/information creator	• Employ traditional and/or emerging processes (e.g., digital scholarship) of information creation and dissemination within a particular discipline • Determine preferred level of copyright permissions when publishing/sharing own work

Information Has Value

Information possesses several dimensions of value, including as a commodity, as a means of education, as a means to influence, and as a means of negotiating and understanding the world. Legal and socioeconomic interests influence information production, dissemination, and access.

By the end of the FY, a student should be able to:	The intermediate student should be able to:	The graduating senior should be able to:
• Recognize when ideas need to be attributed to others and what is "common knowledge" • Identify citation elements and document sources accurately • Demonstrate how to integrate the ideas of others through quoting and paraphrasing • Understand College policy on academic integrity and the Honor Code	• Distinguish among different disciplinary conventions for citation and communication • Recognize issues related to information commodification (e.g., filter bubbles and search result personalization) • Identify and discuss issues related to open access and fee-based resources	• Examine information privilege and how the production and dissemination of information may impact issues of access or lack of access • Articulate the purpose and distinguish characteristics of copyright, fair use, and the public domain • Follow legal and ethical guidelines in gathering data and using information • Identify and discuss issues related to censorship, freedom of speech, and access to information