Undergraduate Library Information Literacy Curriculum

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Introduction

The central mission of library instruction is to create information literate students. According to the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education "Information literacy is 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." Thus, information literacy provides a foundation for life-long learning, the ultimate goal of education, and is common to all disciplines, learning environments, and levels of education. In the Association of American Colleges & Universities report College Learning for the New Global Century, information literacy is discussed as an essential learning outcome students need to prepare for twenty-first century challenges. As information professionals, librarians are uniquely positioned to guide the process of integrating information literacy within the university curriculum and to ensure that students are prepared to address local and global issues and to make a difference in the cultural and economic fabric of Montana and the world.

Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education (2015) is “organized into six frames, each consisting of a concept central to information literacy (threshold concepts), a set of knowledge practices (demonstrations of ways in which learners can increase their understanding of these information literacy concepts), and a set of dispositions (the affective, attitudinal, or valing dimension of learning)” that together comprise “conceptual understandings that organize many other concepts and ideas about information, research, and scholarship into a coherent whole.”

ACRL Frames (in alphabetical order):

Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
Information resources reflect their creators’ expertise and credibility, and are evaluated based on the information need and the context in which 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.

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.

*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 and dissemination.

*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.

*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.

*Searching as Strategic Exploration*

Searching for information is often nonlinear and iterative, requiring the evaluation of a range of information sources and the mental flexibility to pursue alternate avenues as new understanding develops.

**Library Information Literacy Curriculum**

The strategic integration of information literacy into the curriculum begins with first-year initiatives that serve as the basis for information literacy instruction in the disciplines at the junior and senior levels (Tables 1-2). First-year curriculum integration decisions have been made on the basis of several factors:

- integration into courses that are a part of the standard university curriculum;
- integration into courses with a research component, usually smaller enrollment classes; and
- integration into required courses with a large enrollment

Specific standards and teaching strategies have been identified for targeted courses to establish quality learning opportunities for first-year students. At every opportunity, librarians seek to serve as research consultants and pedagogical guides to facilitate the successful delivery of information literacy content by teaching faculty in the disciplines.

**Targeted First-year Courses:**

- College Writing I, WRIT 101
- Introduction to Public Speaking, COMX 111
- Global Leadership Seminar
- Introduction to Honors Seminar

**Upper-Division Library Information Literacy Curriculum**

Based on the delivery of lower-division information literacy instruction, liaison librarians work collaboratively with faculty in all the departments, schools, and colleges to tailor advanced information literacy instruction to upper-division students in their major studies (Tables 1-2). Liaison librarians target research and writing courses in all majors. Librarians may:
• Collaborate with faculty and department curriculum committees to integrate information literacy instruction into the curriculum and learning outcomes of the academic unit.
• Provide consultative services to teaching faculty to develop research assignments.
• Promote instruction in the use of library resources to students and faculty, integrating the tiered Library Information Literacy Curriculum.
• Serve as an embedded librarian within classes during sessions focused on research assignments.
• Create web-based subject resources for faculty, students, and staff.
• Maintain regular, advertised office hours each semester to provide individual and small group research assistance.
• Provide Information Center Reference assistance on a regular schedule.

The following information literacy knowledge practices and dispositions address all six frames of the ACRL Framework and are adapted to the learning environment at the University of Montana.
Table 1. Information Literacy Knowledge Practices. The following are information literacy knowledge practices for students to explore during each of the indicated class levels.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>100-level</th>
<th>200-level</th>
<th>300-level</th>
<th>400-level</th>
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<tr>
<td>Identify research questions; translate questions into keywords for searching</td>
<td>Choose and state a research topic; use research to refine topic</td>
<td>Choose the appropriate resources, sources, or investigative methods based on research need</td>
<td>Identify important associations, publications, and scholars in the discipline</td>
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<td>Critically evaluate information: assess the reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, impact and point or view or bias of information sources</td>
<td>Manage research with keyword and subject searching; broaden and narrow search terms</td>
<td>Combine new and prior knowledge to create original scholarship</td>
<td>Understand the complexity of information production processes and organization</td>
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<td>Recognize and assess the value and distinctness of information resources (e.g., website sources, online journals, print material)</td>
<td>Execute both keyword and subject searches; execute revised searches to refine results</td>
<td>Recognize the ways in which sources are utilized by different disciplines</td>
<td>Apply discipline-specific information resources and their organization and use</td>
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<td>Identify key stakeholders who are interested in the topic and might produce information</td>
<td>Trace citation data back to original source</td>
<td>Identify gaps in research; compare and contrast research arguments, data, studies, and methodologies</td>
<td>Use advanced search strategies (e.g., use of controlled vocabularies, Boolean operators, cited references)</td>
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<td>Construct in-text citations and a bibliography, inclusive of all source types and formats (e.g., articles, images, music; print, electronic)</td>
<td>Recognize the ethical issues related to information access</td>
<td>Identify discipline-specific citation styles</td>
<td>Follow ethical and legal guidelines when citing information</td>
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Table 2. Information Literacy Dispositions.

The following are information literacy dispositions that students will demonstrate at each of the indicated class levels.

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<tr>
<td>Confer with instructors and librarians about appropriate research topics, information resources and search strategies</td>
<td>Understand that intellectual property is a legal and social construct that varies by culture and across time</td>
<td>Consider research an open-ended process</td>
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<td>Value the distinctness of information sources (e.g., popular, trade, and scholarly; primary and secondary; current and historical, etc.)</td>
<td>Understand and explain why there is usually not “one” source that will meet all research needs</td>
<td>Combine, relate, and reconcile new information with prior knowledge and beliefs</td>
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<td>Acknowledge biases that may privilege some sources of authority over others</td>
<td>Recognize different information sources and explain the value and differences between them, including their scope, audience and intent (e.g., archival collections; government information; popular, trade, and scholarly publications)</td>
<td>Recognize the value of original scholarship; construct an original argument or position based on research findings</td>
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<td>Recognize his/her rights as a member of the academic community to freedom of intellectual inquiry and inviolate privacy in accessing library collections and services</td>
<td>Compare the use of information sources by discipline and value diverse ideas and worldviews</td>
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<td>Recognize that different disciplines have different citation styles and style guidelines</td>
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<td>Identify important associations, publications, and scholars in the discipline; explain the role of these resources in the discipline; explain the contributions of individual scholars to the discipline</td>
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<td>Explain the economic, legal, political, and socio-economic impacts on information access and use (e.g., censorship, constraints, costs, funded research, policies, scholarship)</td>
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<td>Describe key discipline-specific information resources and how they are organized and used</td>
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<td>Persist in information searches despite challenges</td>
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Works Consulted

<http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>


