Information Literacy in a Nut Shell

First Year Writing Instructors often wonder, “How can I teach Information Literacy? I’m not a librarian?”

Library resources are only a part of how Information Literacy contributes to the intellectual and creative growth of your students. This basic guide will illustrate the many possible learning and critical thinking opportunities that come up in your everyday classes.

Whenever you are addressing or speaking about any of these topics, you are on the fringes if not right in the middle of information literacy.

- **Inquiry**: Develop questions to explore; Explore ideas to formulate a possible focus (or 2 or 3)

- **Frame**: Begin the process of planned and strategic “thinking about” or research
  - Prepare a plan before searching that include possible keywords, relevant disciplinary areas, and starting points (books, magazines, web, etc.).
  - Search in a strategic manner that enables continual revision and refinement

- **Thinking outside the comfort zone**: understanding arguments (voices) in discussion
  - Understand that research is an iterative process that depends upon asking increasingly complex questions whose answers develop new questions or lines of inquiry
  - Accept possible discomfort by working through “counter-intuitive” ideas

- **Evaluation**: Make decisions on possible relevancy, credibility, authority, bias, point of view,
  - Understand that authority is constructed and contextual

- **Metacognition / Reflection**: Purposefully decide what information they choose to accept into their world view
  - Are able to tell you why

Your work with them in FYW will give them the groundwork they need to grow into their future classes and careers.

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*Information literacy concepts can be broken into the several general and overlapping categories of reflect, inquire, find, interpret, evaluate, and manage (not always in that order). These apply to required readings as well as to outside research.*

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Updated: 9/1/2016 kl,dr
**Why is this important for students?**

First Year Writing is often the first place students encounter Information Literacy in their careers at the University of Connecticut. Your thoughtful planning will result in:

- Lessening information overload for students
- Experiencing Information Literacy as a **process** leading to better thinking

**Preparing your semester plan**

Go over your syllabus and identify areas to highlight or introduce information literacy concepts. Your syllabus already contains lots of information literacy opportunities. Identify these points, and mark and annotate them for your planning. Donovan will be glad to help!

Begin laying the groundwork for information literacy on the first day of class. The **readings and content of your specific course** will determine the timing and specific elements of Information Literacy you will address throughout your semester. Bring your students to the library as many times as needed. It is best to choose a few goals and repeat, looking for growth in understanding.

**Ideas for discussion throughout the semester when relevant:**

*Evaluate and Reflect*

- Determine purpose of item: inform, sell, persuade, etc.
- Strategic skimming for relevance and topic
- Author credentials, expertise, authority
- Examine for generalizations, misrepresentations, and/or bias
- Verify information using multiple or respected sources
- Take into account the publication date and currency, if appropriate
- Assess the quality of the References cited. Find relevant ones.
- Find other articles listed in “Work Cited,” “Cited By,” and “Related Articles.”
- Differences between types of publications (e.g., book, newspaper, magazine, blog post, research article), and their purpose. Differentiate between popular or scholarly work.
- Determine what types of sources will be useful **in the context of the assignment**

*Interpret*

- Place ideas within the discourse of other texts / Finding a conversation
- Choose a lens or viewpoint as a starting point or focus
- Refute or challenge ideas and texts
- Strategic skimming for relevance and topic
- Synthesize concepts and coming up with your own thoughts, ideas

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Begin developing awareness of disciplinary (subject) thinking to select appropriate database(s) for researching their current topic(s)

- What disciplines or subjects might hold information on their theme/topic?
- Discussions: What would you find in Sociology, Political Science, Women’s Studies?

Discussions/activity: What would they find or not find in JSTOR, MLA International Bibliography, CQ Researcher? (others as appropriate)

Remember, we are not creating librarians or English majors but opening doors for exploration.

Librarians are ready to help

- Analyze your syllabus for the best opportunities to introduce info-lit concepts
- Provide in depth collaboration on any assignment.
- Discuss and clarify info-lit questions.
- Answer questions about the library website

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Contact us at: infolit@uconn.edu

Find all these materials and more digitally at the LibGuide for FYW