

## **WVU Libraries Instruction and Information Literacy Program, 2013**

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The Instruction Committee thanks the librarians of the University of Rhode Island Libraries for the web version of their Plan for Information Literacy, which we used in part as a model for this plan for WVU Libraries. We also thank the Association for College and Research Libraries (ACRL) for their workbook entitled: *Analyzing Your Instructional Environment: A Workbook*. [Updated 2010.]

## **I. Information Literacy Overview**

Academic libraries add value to the teaching and learning missions of their universities through information literacy instruction. The WVU Libraries already offer expert research instruction across many disciplines in order to provide students and others with the skills and knowledge to identify, find, and evaluate information. Parts of an overall program for information literacy are significantly developed at WVU Libraries. These include ULIB 101: Introduction to Library Research, a one credit course which reaches over 800 hundred first year through senior students each year, the Information Literacy Course Enhancement Program (ILCEP), which has reached 1100+ students since 2010, and the many efforts of instructional librarians on all three campuses and at the satellite campuses of WVU.

### **A. What is Information Literacy?**

The [Association of College and Research Libraries' \(ACRL\) Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education](#) state that “[Information literacy] is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed and assume greater control over their own learning.” The information competency standards of ACRL are:

Standard 1. The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed.

Standard 2. The information literate student accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.

Standard 3. The information literate student evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.

Standard 4. The information literate student, individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.

Standard 5. 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.

The WVU Libraries Information Literacy Program adapts the ACRL definition to state that information literacy is “the set of skills and abilities to effectively identify, find, evaluate and ethically use traditional and

emerging sources of information.” Information literate individuals are able to think critically about the research process during their academic careers but also throughout their working years and personal lives.

There are many disciplines that have developed specialized information literacy standards. Examples include:

- [Information Literacy Competency Standards for Journalism Students and Professionals \(PDF\)](#)
- [Information Literacy Standards for Anthropology and Sociology Students](#)
- [Information Literacy Standards for Science and Technology](#)
- [Information Literacy Standards for Teacher Education \(PDF\)](#)
- [Political Science Research Competency Guidelines \(PDF\)](#)
- [Psychology Information Literacy Standards](#)
- [Research Competency Guidelines for Literatures in English](#)
- [Visual Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education](#)

## **B. The Information Literacy Program’s Role in the Educational Mission of West Virginia University**

The mission of the WVU Libraries Information Literacy Program is to foster integration of information literacy into the University educational process and the curriculum, and to promote information literacy for all members of the University community. The program uses available expertise, resources, and careful planning to teach as many WVU students as possible how to develop their research capabilities, to think critically, to value their own questions and recognize inquiry as central to learning, and to achieve academic success.

These objectives are tied directly to [West Virginia University’s mission](#) to “deliver high-quality education and excel in discovery and innovation,” and [vision](#) to “attain national research prominence, thereby enhancing educational achievement, global engagement, diversity, and the vitality and well-being of the people of West Virginia.” In addition, the first goal in the [2020 Strategic Plan](#) is to “engage undergraduate, graduate and professional students in a challenging academic environment.” In the third aspiration, the 2020 Plan states, “West Virginia University graduates will be among the nation’s leaders in career readiness.” Because knowing how to locate, evaluate, and use information is crucial to a high-quality education, as well as a key component in the research process,

possession of information literacy skills is essential to achieving these aspirational goals.

The Libraries teach these essential information literacy skills and for this reason, play a key role within the University community as we work together to achieve these goals. As the mission of the Libraries emphasizes, the Libraries must “actively participate as a partner in WVU’s high-quality education.” In the [West Virginia University Libraries’ 2020 Strategic Plan](#), the WVU Libraries have pledged to “seek sustainable and scalable new models of library instruction related to University priorities” and to “seek opportunities for new research and partnerships with WVU teaching faculty.”

WVU instruction librarians offer instruction in research capabilities because:

- i. The information environment is too complex and changing too rapidly to expect students to acquire information literacy without a planned, systematic, cumulative instructional program.
- ii. Disciplines are changing, communication is multi-dimensional, and students are expected to employ sophisticated information seeking techniques in the twenty-first century.
- iii. All University students need research abilities to succeed in their classes and prepare for a lifetime of information use in the future.
- iv. Students need basic information literacy capabilities in the first years of college, and later they must develop advanced, research level abilities in their majors, and professional degree programs.

### **C. Incremental Implementation of Information Literacy at the University Libraries**

We have developed the following information literacy competency and learning outcomes for lower division, upper division, and graduate students at WVU. We encourage faculty members to incorporate these outcomes into their courses and assignments. These outcomes also serve as a guide for assessment of information literacy skills among students at WVU. Faculty are encouraged to adapt these outcomes to fit their courses and assignments or to integrate them with discipline-specific information literacy outcomes from other relevant organizations.

**i. Information Literacy Competency Outcomes by Year of Study Summary**

- a.** First Year/Second Year--- In the first and second years, the focus is on foundational information literacy skills, instruction, and practice. This foundational curriculum aims to bring all students up to the same level of basic understanding and competence so that future instruction can take place in the appropriate contextual setting as students progress through their studies. After students have received the basics, we focus on building and reinforcing foundational skills and concepts. The faculty with whom we collaborate, as well as the course context, determine the content and form of this curriculum.
- b.** Third Year/Fourth Year--- The discipline specific curriculum occurs in the students' junior and senior years, and involves a lot of collaboration between discipline faculty and librarians. The focus here is integrating skills and expanding knowledge of specialized, discipline-specific resources, advanced searching and evaluating skills, and ethical matters of intellectual property in the context of each of the disciplines and where possible, address critical thinking.
- c.** Graduate/Professional Students--- The graduate curriculum provides expanding opportunities for conducting research in the discipline. Librarians work with faculty to design information literacy sessions at a more advanced level, and by this time, are dealing with students that are more competent and skilled in information literacy. Instruction at this level focuses on advanced assistance with research methods and resources.

ii. **Desired Learning Outcomes for WVU Students<sup>1</sup>**

<b>ACRL Standards</b>	<b>Lower Division Students will:</b>	<b>Upper Division Students will:</b>	<b>Graduate Students will:</b>
<b>Information need</b>	Begin to formulate research questions based on a topic or assignment requirement.	Broaden or narrow a research question based on research interest and resources found.	Formulate a highly specific research question, reevaluating when necessary.
<b>Accessing Information</b>	<p>Search the catalog to identify books and other materials owned by the library.</p> <p>Find a book on the shelf using its LC call number.</p> <p>Search multidisciplinary databases to find full text journal articles on a topic.</p>	<p>Use EZ Borrow or Interlibrary Loan to request materials not owned by the library.</p> <p>Search subject specific databases to identify journal articles on a topic.</p> <p>Use Find it @ WVU links to find full text of articles.</p>	Use a variety of resources (databases, library catalog, WorldCat) to locate and request materials in his or her field.
<b>Evaluating Information</b>	<p>Distinguish between reference sources and research articles when writing a paper.</p> <p>Begin to evaluate sources based on given criteria (relevancy, currency, reliability)</p>	<p>Critically evaluate sources based on disciplinary standards.</p> <p>Distinguish between primary and secondary sources.</p> <p>Distinguish between popular and scholarly sources.</p> <p>Understand the differences between types of resources (books, journal articles, dissertations, white papers, etc.)</p>	Evaluate sources in the context of methodology used in his or her field.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the [Information Learning Outcomes for SUNY Oswego Undergraduates](#) chart.

<b>Using Information to meet a need</b>	<p>Use reference sources to locate background information on a topic.</p> <p>Use books and/or journal articles to support an argument in short research paper.</p>	<p>Use a variety of sources types to support an argument or outline a topic in a long research paper or other assignment.</p>	<p>Write a thesis or complete another original research project.</p>
<b>Using Information ethically and legally</b>	<p>Cite sources using an established citation format in order to avoid plagiarism.</p> <p>Locate the University's policy on Academic Integrity on the institutional website successfully.</p> <p>Read and understand the University's policy on Academic Integrity.</p>	<p>Cite sources in the established citation style for his or her major field.</p>	<p>Consider issues of intellectual property and copyright in the context of his or her published work.</p> <p>Understand research integrity in the context of his or her discipline.</p>

## II. Scope of the Current Information Literacy and Instruction Program

The Information Literacy Program focuses on undergraduate and graduate students as well as the teaching and research needs of the campus faculty and staff.

### A. Addressing the Needs of WVU Students

Student achievement is paramount to the library's mission and is key to its success. The ways the libraries support student engagement and persistence include:

- i. Helping to build information skills and a sense of control as students become independent, lifelong learners.
- ii. Providing a quiet place for individual and group study, with one-on-one assistance in accessing information.

- iii. Providing a learner-focused instructional program that develops self-sufficiency in finding, selecting, evaluating and citing information.
- iv. Empowering students to become information literate thus decreasing anxiety and increasing confidence in their ability to tackle new subjects and issues.

## **B. Addressing the Needs WVU Faculty**

Faculty involvement and collaboration in information literacy instruction is critical. Librarians promote the information literacy program to faculty on a continuous basis. Through collaboration with teaching faculty, librarians are better positioned to integrate information literacy into the curriculum. Together faculty and librarians design exercises and assignments to assist students in practicing research based skills. Awareness of information literacy concepts and skills are important to faculty in their own research and teaching. The Information Literacy Course Enhancement Project (ILCEP) has modelled this kind of faculty librarian collaboration for West Virginia University since 2009. Librarians also provide information literacy instruction assistance to subject faculty in information research skills. These are delivered through workshops and one-on-one consultations that introduce new or enhanced discipline-specific resources to faculty.

## **C. Current Assessment Efforts**

Instruction librarians at West Virginia University Libraries assess their students' learning in multiple ways. These include:

- i. One-minute papers administered after "one-shot" instruction sessions
- ii. In-class quizzes and homework during course-integrated instruction and credit-bearing courses such as ENGL 103
- iii. Homework and other assignments during course-integrated instruction and credit-bearing courses such as ULIB 101
- iv. Grades for credit-bearing courses such as ULIB 101
- v. WVU Libraries online plagiarism avoidance tutorial
- vi. ILCEP participant reports to the Director of Instruction and Information Literacy



- vii. Instruction statistics kept by instruction coordinators and contributed to each libraries' Annual Report
- viii. Results of large studies that WVU Libraries participates in, such as RAILS, Project Information Literacy, and LIBQUAL

### **III. Information Literacy and Instruction Program Goals**

To respond to the imperatives of the dynamic information environment, the Libraries' mission and the University's 2020 Plan, the Instruction Committee of the WVU Libraries aspires to move WVU Libraries' contribution to research instruction to the next level in the coming year. We aim to use available expertise, resources, and careful planning to teach as many WVU students as possible how to develop their research capabilities, think critically, and achieve academic success. We have set the following goals to achieve this mission for information literacy competencies throughout our academic community.

**Goal #1:** Increase the number of students reached by the information literacy program.

**Goal #2:** Enrich current instruction to allow deeper learning of information literacy outcomes and focus on critical thinking in teaching, assignments, and assessment.

**Goal #3:** Assess teaching and learning of information literacy instruction at WVUL and report findings to the Director of Instruction and Information Literacy.

**Goal #4:** Establish information literacy as a priority on the West Virginia University campus.

### **IV. Assessment Planning and Evaluation**

Programmatic assessment incorporates a variety of methods and measures so that conclusions may be corroborated, and stronger evidence of quality may be provided. Because assessment is strongly linked to planning, it should be designed to provide information that can be used to improve services, and should be a continuous, iterative process.

In addition to informal feedback from participants, each program/course should have, built within its structure, clear and measurable goals by which the success and effectiveness of the project can be assessed. As much as possible, the goals should use a standardized language and methodology, so the many and varied instruction sessions can be assessed across the entire Information Literacy program.

## **V. Conclusion**

The Instruction Committee of the library faculty welcomes responses to this statement and its four goals at [InformationLiteracyInitiative@mail.wvu.edu](mailto:InformationLiteracyInitiative@mail.wvu.edu). In order to achieve the stated goals, the instruction librarians of WVUL require support and collaboration from interested WVU faculty and other educational stakeholders throughout West Virginia University in the near future.

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