2021

Information Literacy Learner Profile

Why information literacy instruction?

"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."
– Framework for information literacy for higher education (2021)

" Student retention rates are higher for those students whose courses include an information literacy instruction component. On average, First-Year [success rate] for students whose courses included information literacy instruction was higher than the [success rate] of students whose courses did not. Students exposed to library instruction interactions successfully completed 1.8 more credit hours per year than their counterparts who did not participate in courses containing information literacy instruction. "

– Blake, Bowles, Pearson, & Szentkiralyi (2017)

The 4 Competencies
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Using Alverno's 8 Abilities and the Association of College and Research Libraries' 6 frames of the Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education, we've developed 4 key areas for library instruction. Much like the Abilities, these Competencies are interconnected, but most instruction will target only one or two Competencies.

1. Selects sources based on critical evaluation

Abilities: Communication and Valuing

2. Uses information to accomplish a purpose

Abilities: Communication, Analysis, and Problem Solving

3. Understands the importance of cultural context to issues of authority, marginalization, and access

Abilities: Effective Citizenship, Developing a Global Perspective, and Social Interaction

4. Cultivates an open-minded attitude of inquiry and self-reflection

Abilities: Effective Citizenship, Social Interaction, and Communication

Assessment of Competencies

Similar to the Level system for Abilities, Information Literacy Competencies are assessed based on 4 levels of learning.

A. New to higher education

Learners in this group have little or no experience in higher education and have the least developed information literacy skills.

B. Lower-level students

Learners in this group are in their first or second year of higher education and are beginning to develop their information literacy skills.

C. Upper-level students

Learners in this group are in their third or fourth year of higher education and have fairly well-developed information literacy skills.

D. Graduate students

Learners in this group are either advanced upperclassmen or graduate students who are becoming leaders in their disciplines and are able to share their information literacy skills with others.

Selects sources based on critical evaluation

A Selects a small number of sources using limited criteria (such as requirements of an assignment,) typically the first few results of their first search attempt.

B Selects a larger number of sources using simple criteria and multiple search attempts. Begins to understand that different genres and disciplines require different source types.

C Uses disciplinary frameworks and complex criteria to select a variety of sources appropriate for their research purpose, the genre they are creating, and their intended audience.

D Uses multidisciplinary frameworks and complex criteria to select a variety of sources appropriate for their purpose, genre, and audience to combine disciplines, formats, and perspectives in novel ways.

Uses information to accomplish a purpose

A Uses information to accomplish a limited purpose, such as passing a class. May use the information incorrectly or without proper citation.

B Uses information to accomplish a simple purpose, such as performing well on an assignment. Information is used correctly and citations are largely correct, but the produced work is incomplete and lacking analysis.

C Uses information to accomplish a complex purpose, such as communicating an issue to stakeholders. Information is used correctly and the produced work feels complete, but contributes little to the scholarly conversation around the issue.

D Uses information to accomplish a complex purpose by contributing deep analysis and novel ideas to the scholarly conversation around an issue.

Understands the importance of cultural context to issues of authority, marginalization, and access

A Understands that cultural context plays a role in whose voices are represented in scholarly conversations, but has a limited understanding of contexts that are not their own.

B Understands the role of place, time, and culture in the structure of scholarly conversation, including the ways expertise is constructed, whose voices are excluded, and how information is disseminated.

C Recognizes that cultural context defines all scholarly conventions and uses their knowledge of disciplinary frameworks to include voices and types of authority that are typically absent from work in their discipline.

D Actively challenges systems that confer authority and highlights the voices of marginalized people in their research.

Cultivates an open-minded attitude of inquiry and reflection

A Attempts to cultivate an open-minded attitude towards asking questions and improving their skills, but struggles to identify appropriate people to ask for help or to truly self-reflect.

B Cultivates an open-minded attitude by asking some questions or by self-reflecting on their skills, but fails to fully integrate new information into their understanding.

C Cultivates an open-minded attitude by asking questions and by self-reflecting on their skills and learning. Fully integrates new information into their understanding and prioritizes personal and professional growth.

D Cultivates an open-minded attitude in others as a mentor by answering questions, encouraging self-reflection, and discussing methods of personal and professional growth.

References

Blake, J., Bowles-Terry, M., Pearson, N. S., & Szentkiralyi, Z. (2017). The impact of information literacy instruction on student success: a multi-institutional investigation and analysis. *Central University Libraries Research*. 13. https://scholar.smu.edu/libraries_cul_research/13

Framework for information literacy for higher education. (2021). *Association of College & Research Libraries*. http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework

Reach out to schedule information literacy instruction in your course today!

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