Guide to Information Literacy Teaching

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Before you start

Thoughts to consider:

- Are your students required to do research to complete their coursework?
- Are you worried about the quality of resources students are citing?
- How prepared are your students to start the research process?
- What are your strategies for engaging students in the research process?
- Are you worried about plagiarism?
- Have you considered integrating into your course syllabi a timely and appropriate librarian-led research instruction session?
Information Literacy

Information Literate and Lifelong Learners
Okanagan College transforms lives and communities. The vision of Okanagan College “as a catalyst for change” (Okanagan College, 2013) is crucial in this rapidly changing digital age where information is growing exponentially. Emerging technologies and the changing landscape of information are affecting how individuals and communities are navigating, managing and using information. Individuals in all fields are required to be information literate. In support of developing information literate and lifelong learners, OC librarians run an active integrated instructional program committed to providing critical thinking and information literacy skills (research skills).

You may be teaching research-based classes where students are required to use a wide range of resources to complete their coursework. This chapter focuses on information literacy (IL) and how instructors and librarians can work together to promote excellent critical thinking and independent research skills in students by integrating information literacy skills into course curriculum.

Contact Okanagan College liaison or campus librarians who have expertise in engaging in the teaching and learning process with all teaching departments.

1. What is information literacy?
Information literacy (IL) has been defined by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) as a set of abilities requiring individuals to "recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information." (Association of College and Research Libraries [ACRL], 2000). The ACRL suggests that information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning and 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” (ACRL, 2000).

ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education
In 2000 the ACRL adopted the Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education which has become a key framework for teaching information literacy skills by academic librarians in North America. The standards join other information literacy models around the world to assist educators in the delivery of information literacy skills to learners. This group of standards has become one of “the most essential document[s], related to the emergence of information literacy as a recognized learning outcome at many institutions of higher education” (Bell, 2013).

The ACRL Standards have been “the defacto definition of information literacy” (Bell, 2013), and are comprised of the following five core competencies where the information literate student:

1. Determines the nature and extent of the information needed.
2. Accesses needed information effectively and efficiently.
3. Evaluates information and its sources critically and incorporates selected information into his or her knowledge base and value system.
4. Individually or as a member of a group, uses information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.
5. Understands many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information and accesses and uses information ethically and legally. (ACRL, 2000).
ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

The ACRL Standards have been under review by the ACRL Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education Task Force for several years resulting in the recently published Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. The Framework has cited that the recent trend of rethinking and reframing of the standards has been instigated by the “emerging models of information literacy, recognized by the development of multiple new literacies and the need to provide a stronger continuum of literacy from K-16” (Bell, 2013). There is a need to identify “foundational experiences that will have enduring value” (Fister, 2015).

As a result of reimagining information literacy, the Task Force has developed a much more complex definition of information literacy:

"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." (2015).

“The debate about the Standards versus the Framework has been quite heated at times, but it has highlighted ...the need for us to work closely with our teaching faculty rather than rely on a disciplinary definition of what students need to learn....[Information literacy] has to be learned over several years, because it’s complicated and needs lots of practice. It’s experiential learning that involves skills, dispositions, emotions, and varying degrees of intrinsic motivation. You learn how information works by encountering, using, and creating it” (Fister, 2015).

The six concepts that anchor the new Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education are:

- Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
- Information Creation as a Process
- Information Has Value
- Research as Inquiry
- Scholarship as Conversation
- Searching as Strategic Exploration (ACRL, 2015)

The new Framework is becoming a key document in the learning and teaching educational reform movement of academic institutions around the world and supports the concepts that:

- IL is not always about the Library, but is always about the learner
- IL is moving away from individual skills to social practices
- IL provides flexible options for implementation rather than a set of rigid standards
- IL is moving away from pushing products to facilitating process
- IL encourages students to not only consume information but also have a conversation with information and contribute new knowledge ... students have a voice.

2. Information Literacy Instruction in the Classroom

The Okanagan College Library’s Mission Statement is “The Library promotes student success through the development of critical thinking and independent research skills, and advances teaching and learning by supporting instruction and professional development."

The goal of librarians at Okanagan College is to engage all students at all levels across the curriculum in information literacy and critical thinking skills and provide experiential opportunities to explore the multilayered aspects of information seeking, gathering and creating. For over three decades Okanagan College librarians, in collaboration with teaching faculty departments, have been teaching information literacy to students across the institution in multiple programs and disciplines. This practice has resulted in an active information literacy program committed to providing research skills instruction in support of developing information literate and lifelong learners. “With its focus on critical thinking and reasoning, information literacy is vital to students’ ability to learn while enrolled at Okanagan College and throughout their working life” (Okanagan College. Library Department, 2013).
Liaison Librarians at Okanagan College

Okanagan College librarians work closely with faculty to support learning and teaching by offering relevant and timely in-class research instruction for all research-based courses. Each librarian is assigned liaison duties for multiple departments for specific faculty needs including course and assignment research instruction with supporting research guides, reference and research assistance, and collection development. The integration of IL skills into research-based curriculum, one of the primary focuses of librarians, helps support the learning outcomes of Okanagan College’s courses and programs (Okanagan College. Library Department, 2013).

Course Integrated Library Research Instruction (CILRI)

The Library and the English Department launched a pilot project in the fall of 2009 that formally included embedding IL wording into all first-year English course syllabi and scheduling research instruction into all first-year English course timetables. In 2010 the pilot project, referred to as CILRI (Course Integrated Library Research Instruction), was reviewed and accepted by both the English and the Library Departments. CILRI is now delivered as an ongoing program in English on all four campuses and integrates librarian-led research process skills into all first year English courses in conjunction with research-based projects. In 2011 CTCL (Community and Technical College Libraries) Innovation Achievement Award was awarded to the librarians of Okanagan College Library for the development and implementation of CILRI stating that “[w]hile the primary achievement of CILRI is the expansion of instructional opportunities for students to develop research and critical thinking skills, one of CILRI’s additional benefits is the strengthening of relationships between librarians and teaching faculty ...[and] because of CILRI, the Library is now better placed to be a full partner in the teaching and learning role of the College (Canadian Library Association, 2011)”.

3. Library Research Guides

Okanagan College Librarians regularly create online subject or course library research guides in support of course research. Current research guides may be found on the OC Library Research Guides Home Page. Ask your liaison librarian about creating a research guide tailored specifically for your course such as the following guide created by the Communications Department’s liaison librarian.

Example: Communications 250: Cultural Industries in Canada  
http://libguides.okanagan.bc.ca/cmns250
4. Active Learning Activities in the Classroom

“Active learning activities can engage students in various ways by:

- reading, thinking and speaking critically,
- giving and receiving feedback, and
- expressing ideas through writing,
- reflecting on the learning process.”

(Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation, 2014).

Librarians use a variety of active learning activities to engage students such as:
- Minute Papers
- Small group discussions
- Think/Pair/Share
- Reflection on learning
- Brainstorming
- Student led learning

One OC librarian shared the following activity...

“One that I have used in the past is called Give-One-Get-One [one of 18 specific learning activities found in Active learning and adaptive teaching techniques from University of Toronto’s Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation]. You can see the full instructions under technique one. I have done this with more arts and humanities topics but the basic idea is that students fold their piece of paper and write down a bunch of words related to their topic, they then pair up and discuss each other’s topics and try and add to their list of words and ideas. Depending on the length of the class you can have students move around and meet with several partners. Then have a brief discussion on what worked and didn’t work.”

Worksheets

Librarians work closely with teaching faculty to create research worksheets tailored to the learning outcomes of the research instruction class. Not only do worksheets help assess classroom learning but they can also engage learners individually, in small groups or as a class as a whole. They can be springboards to help promote critical thinking, provide opportunities to analyze research strategies, evaluate resources, discuss authority, consider plagiarism and reflect on learning. Students can share conversations about the challenges of the research process including information gathering, evaluating, synthesizing and presenting the information.

Worksheet Example:
5. The Library and Moodle

The Library provides a number of tools to enhance Moodle courses and your student’s learning experience.

Library Box

The Library box can be added to Moodle courses by instructors, providing students with access to key library links and a live OCtopus search box. Students have the ability to use the Library’s search engine from within Moodle courses, get help with a single click, or easily access the Library’s research and course guides. The Library box can be included in a Moodle course by choosing to ‘Add a block’, and then selecting ‘Library’.

Curriculum Builder (CB)

With Curriculum Builder (CB) you can create and manage dynamic course reading lists within Moodle. Create many lists, a single static list, or a single dynamic list. The tool allows instructors to search OCtopus and easily add any results to a reading list. Users can then add additional resource notes and change the order resources appear in the list. The option is also available to include sources outside of OCtopus, including links to articles in other databases, links to websites, and links to books in the Library Catalogue.

Curriculum Builder is meant to save you time and help your students easily find assigned readings. Using CB also means copyright worries can be put to rest. Posting links to articles/resources does not require the same copyright clearance as posting actual articles, and reading list links can be posted indefinitely.

The faculty services page on the Library’s website contains more information and detailed instructions on including Curriculum Builder in your Moodle courses.

Embed Videos from the Films on Demand (FOD) Database

Instructors can seamlessly integrate video content into Moodle courses using Films on Demand’s embed feature. This convenient option provides a secure way to connect students with on-demand digital video content, and eliminates the need for an additional layer of authentication. Students view films from within Moodle courses and therefore bypass the native database.

Detailed instructions on how to embed a video from the FOD database can be found on the database’s detailed information page, located in the Library’s e-resources and database listing (located on the Library website’s home page → find menu → articles).

For more information on how the Library can enhance your Moodle course, contact your liaison librarian, or Okanagan College’s Web Services Librarian.

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6. Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial

Okanagan College’s Academic Regulations and Policies states that “[p]lagiarism is the presentation of another person’s work or ideas without proper or complete acknowledgement.” And that “[s]elf-plagiarism is the submission of work that is the same or substantially the same as work prepared or performed by the student for credit in another course... Although self-plagiarism may not involve the intellectual theft that characterizes plagiarism... it is a form of academic misconduct and is subject to the same disciplinary actions as plagiarism.” (Okanagan College. Academic Regulations and Policies). An excellent tutorial created by OC Librarians called Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial can be found at http://libguides.okanagan.bc.ca/avoidingplagiarism.

Librarians help students avoid plagiarism by integrating citation style guidelines into library research instruction classes, by offering citation style workshops and one-one-sessions, by creating citation style guides, and by embedding citation information into subject guides. For more information go to Style & Citation Guides (APA, Chicago, MLA) http://www.okanagan.bc.ca/Student_Services/students/library/help/style.html.

7. Okanagan College Library: Selected Links

For more information on library services for faculty and staff please go to:

► Avoiding Plagiarism Tutorial http://libguides.okanagan.bc.ca/avoidingplagiarism.

► Enhancing the Practice of Learning and Teaching. Institute for Learning and Teaching Newsletter, Okanagan College. Winter 2014 5(1) Theme: "Partners in Learning: Building an Information Literate Institution"

► Faculty and Library Staff Library Services
http://www.okanagan.bc.ca/Student_Services/students/library/services/faculty.html

► Information Literacy at Okanagan College
http://www.okanagan.bc.ca/Student_Services/students/library/services/faculty/InfoLit.html

► Information Literacy (IL): Course Integrated Library Research Instruction (CILRI) LibGuide
http://libguides.okanagan.bc.ca/CILRI

► Institute for Learning and Teaching Resource LibGuide (ILT) http://libguides.okanagan.bc.ca/ILT

► Liaison Librarians http://www.okanagan.bc.ca/Student_Services/students/library/about/librarians/liaison.html

► Library Research Guides (LibGuides) http://libguides.okanagan.bc.ca/HomePage

► Okanagan College Library http://www.okanagan.bc.ca/Student_Services/students/library.html

► Research Instruction Request Form
http://www.okanagan.bc.ca/Student_Services/students/library/services/faculty/InstructionReq.html
8. References and Further Resources


