

## Information Literacy Plan

### Information Literacy Program Mission

The mission of the Loyola ▪ Notre Dame Library's Information Literacy Program is to advance the information literacy skills of the students of Loyola University Maryland and Notre Dame of Maryland University in support of the missions of both schools to promote intellectual excellence, personal development, and strong leadership. Information literacy is the ability to access, evaluate, organize, and use information effectively and ethically to meet a need. It forms the basis for lifelong learning, and is common to all disciplines, learning environments, and levels of education.

The development of information literate students is the shared responsibility of the faculty and the library and requires a cohesive integration across the curriculum. Loyola ▪ Notre Dame Library's Research & Instruction Department is committed to collaborating with faculty to develop and coordinate an effective, cross-curricular Information Literacy Program. This approach will foster critical thinking skills and competent retrieval and use of information in order to prepare students for the challenges of academia and for their personal and professional lives.

### Instructional Philosophy



The Loyola ▪ Notre Dame Library (LNDL) Research & Instruction Department believes that incorporating active learning techniques, tailored to and integrated with class assignments, is the most effective approach for delivering library instruction.

LNDL's Information Literacy Program is guided by the philosophy that students learn best by doing rather than listening. For this reason, all library sessions incorporate active learning techniques that engage students and promote problem solving and critical thinking. During these sessions, students search specific library databases and resources as a group, working with the librarian as a guide. Students are asked to take the lead in the search process and provide answers to questions and problems that arise along the way. This allows students the opportunity to apply new skills in a supportive learning environment and build on previous knowledge as they discover how to effectively search for and evaluate resources. The goal of each library session is to prepare students to be successful in their current research assignments, and to strengthen skills that will allow for continued research throughout their educational and professional careers.

As educational technologies continue to develop and grow, so does their ability to provide quality learning opportunities to students at any time and from any place. For this reason, in addition to in-class instruction, the Research & Instruction Department offers online video tutorials and research guides that students can access from their computers or mobile devices. The department also offers one-on-one in-person and online consultations for students, faculty, and staff in order to provide additional personalized instruction at the point of need.

### **Instructional Sequence**

The Research & Instruction Department teaches an average of 300 library sessions per year. 70% of these are for undergraduate classes and 30% are for master's and doctoral classes.

#### ***Undergraduate Students***

Information literacy skills are developed over time, starting with foundational skills introduced early in the curriculum. For this reason, all undergraduate students attend at least one library instruction session during their freshman year. For Notre Dame of Maryland University students, this takes place in their First Year Seminar course (NDMU 100). Loyola University Maryland students come to the library during their Effective Writing course (WR100 or WR101), and during Eloquentia Perfecta (HN 210) for students in the Honors program. In these sessions, students are introduced to core library resources and begin to build the skills necessary for effectively finding, evaluating, and accessing a variety of sources.

It is the library's ongoing goal to see all undergraduate students for at least one information literacy class within their major in addition to their freshman session. Optimally, this would be a research-based course in which the library session is integrated with a research assignment.

This enables students to learn about discipline-specific databases and terminology used in their field. Each student will work with the librarian to build search strategies that they can directly apply to research in their major as well as in their professional career.

### *Graduate and Doctoral Students*

The Research & Instruction Department is dedicated to advancing master's and doctoral students' information literacy skills with the goal of empowering them to successfully find, evaluate, and use information in their programs and carry these skills forward into their professional careers. This goal is achieved by scaffolding information literacy skills within a variety of degree programs, tailoring instruction to meet the unique research needs of each discipline, and offering a wide range of online instructional resources that can be accessed at the point of need. This process lays a solid groundwork for future success in the workplace by strengthening students' ability to transform knowledge and become contributors to their professional communities.

A principle aim of the Research & Instruction Department is to see all master's and doctoral students at multiple points throughout their respective programs. Orientation serves as the first point of contact and allows students to make a personal connection with a Research & Instruction librarian and learn about available library resources and services. The department then seeks to provide information literacy sessions integrated into one or more courses. First, a session taught early in the program serves to introduce students to key databases and resources used in their field and search strategies for finding and accessing information. A second course later in the program—ideally a research methods course—reinforces previously taught concepts and builds advanced research skills, such as evaluating resources and refining search strategies to search more efficiently and effectively.

All master's and doctoral students also have the opportunity to schedule one-on-one consultations with the Research & Instruction staff. These sessions are strongly suggested for those working on doctoral dissertations, and provide a time to meet with a librarian at the beginning of the research process to discuss appropriate databases, build search strategies, and learn about tools for organizing research.

### **Assessment**

Assessment is an integral part of the Information Literacy Program. It serves to examine the ways in which the program is successful and how it can be improved upon. The primary goal is to evaluate what students are able to do as a result of the learning experience, with an emphasis on performative or authentic assessment—to determine whether or not students are able to demonstrate the skills that are taught through library instruction.

Currently, the Research & Instruction Department uses the following methods to assess our instruction:

### *Formal Assessment*

The most established assessment activity used to evaluate the library's Information Literacy Program is an assignment given to all Loyola undergraduate students in their 200-level Literature course, Major Writers. The 10-question assignment asks students to perform basic research tasks, such as finding a book in the catalog, searching in a library database on a given topic, identifying relevant results from a list, and citing information using MLA style. This assessment serves a dual purpose: to prepare students for the main research assignment in their class, and to provide the Research & Instruction department with significant information as to which skills students continue to struggle with and therefore should be reinforced in library instruction.

Formal assessments such as annotated bibliographies, quizzes, and research assignments are also used in several other courses in the Information Literacy Program, primarily in the Psychology, Pharmacy, and Nursing programs. Feedback is gathered from faculty immediately following library instruction sessions, as well as later in the semester, after students have completed research assignments.

### *Informal Assessment*

In many of the information literacy sessions, students are given a challenge research question at the end of the class. This provides an opportunity for librarians to reinforce key concepts and informally assess student learning. As students work independently on finding resources to answer the challenge question, the librarian circulates throughout the room to observe which skills students are able to replicate on their own and which remain problematic. Other informal assessments include observations of students' follow-up questions, expressed needs during one-on-one consultations, and reference interviews from the Research Assistance Desk. Librarians use notes from these informal observations to improve their instruction for future sessions.

The next departmental goal is to pinpoint additional classes and programs where the Research & Instruction department can institute formal and performative assessments, such as graded library assignments and pre- and post- tests.

### *Future Plans*

Looking forward, it is the goal of the LNDL Research & Instruction department to continue to expand the IL Program into the students' advanced studies. This will be done by reaching undergraduates within their majors and incorporating IL sessions into research project-based and research methods courses for master's and doctoral students. The program also strives to

develop new strategies for assessing current instruction and student learning. Finally, the department intends to continue exploring new technologies that can be used to deliver instruction and/or enhance in-person classes. This can be achieved by staying abreast of educational technologies, preparing for new online programs, and creating a self-directed library course in university Course Management Systems.

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### **Collaborative Approach to Information Literacy**

The critical task of empowering students to become information literate, lifelong learners is a shared responsibility of all campus community members. The library is committed to not only serving the students directly, but to fostering relationships throughout the campus that contribute to the creation of critical thinkers. Through raising an awareness of information literacy skills, collaborating with faculty on research activities within the curriculum, and encouraging communication across disciplines, the Research & Instruction Department hopes to build a community that is invested in the information literacy development of every student.

### **Research Activities**

Frequent practice with research activities that incorporate and repeat the process of finding, evaluating, and using resources is crucial to developing information literate students. Regular exposure to quality sources such as scholarly journal articles, books, and government websites via class readings and assignments enables students to recognize and use these sources more easily in their daily lives. Equally important is an emphasis on encouraging each student to think critically, not only about the resources used to complete an assignment, but also about the research strategies and databases used to find the resources. If these components are regularly integrated into the curriculum and supported by both faculty and instruction librarians, students will continue to develop and refine the skills they will need later in their academic and professional careers.

A research activity does not always need to be a formal research paper. It can be any activity or project that requires students to integrate outside information into an assignment, whether to make a point, support an argument, or augment an understanding of a topic.

Here are examples of alternative research activities:

- Presentation
- Debate
- Annotated bibliography (with evaluative or summative annotations)
- Letter to the editor of a local newspaper
- Poster
- Consumer Health Pamphlet
- Student-generated guide to the information sources on a particular subject.

### *Components to Include in a Research Assignment*

When students are asked to use high-quality resources for their assignments and to think critically about how they found their outside sources and evaluated the effectiveness of the sources in relation to their topic, then the assignment will serve to strengthen research skills. Adding one or more of the following components to an assignment will encourage the regular application of these research skills.

### **To promote critical thinking about the research process**

#### **Post-Assignment Reflection**

Ask students to write a few paragraphs reflecting on their experience completing the assignment. This type of reflection encourages students to think critically about their research process and come up with solutions for improving their research skills in the future.

#### **Research Log**

Ask students to keep a record of the databases, websites, and additional tools that they used to find their sources. On this document, students can include search terms that they used and strategies that worked or didn't work well for finding resources. Adding this component to an assignment encourages students to think strategically about how they approach finding outside resources.

#### *Sample Research Log:*

Research Log				
Date of search	Purpose/Objective	Database/Resource Used (IPA, PubMed, Catalog, etc.)	Search Terms Used	Information Found (include what and where)
Sample: 1/30/2012	Find journal articles about Paracelsus and his impact on Pharmacy	IPA	{Paracelsus OR Theophrastus <del>Philippus Aureolus Bombastus von Hohenheim</del> AND pharmacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paracelsus yesterday and today. <i>Deutsche Apotheker-Zeitung</i>, (Germany), Apr 15 1993, vol. 133, pp. 46, 49-52 (ordered through Interlibrary Loan)</li> <li>Paracelsus and his chemical drugs, <i>International Pharmacy Journal</i> (Netherlands), Jul-Aug 1992, vol. 6, pp. 195-196 (saved as .pdf)</li> </ul>
1/31/2012	Find books on medical practices during the Renaissance	Catalog	renaissance AND medicine	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medieval and Renaissance medicine (available on library's 3rd floor)</li> <li>Medieval &amp; early Renaissance medicine (available as <del>ebook</del> through the catalog)</li> </ul>
1/31/2012	Find additional biographical information on Paracelsus	National Library of Medicine Websites	Paracelsus	Paracelsus: History of Medicine, <a href="http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/paracelsus/paracelsus.html">http://www.nlm.nih.gov/exhibition/paracelsus/paracelsus.html</a>

Complete document available at: <http://snipurl.com/research-log>

### Single Article Research Log

Ask students to fill out a research log for one of their resources. This is a quick way to get students to explain how they found the item and evaluated its quality.

### Search History

In most databases, students can print the search history that will show the terms that they used to find their articles. Including the search history with an assignment allows you to grade students on how they searched and the strategies that they used to find their articles.

### To promote evaluating resources used for a project

#### Evaluation Sheet

Provide students with a checklist or a series of questions that they must answer about each resource that they use. This will allow students to demonstrate that they know how to effectively evaluate the resources that they use and that they have gone through this process before using a resource.

Article Evaluation Worksheet	
Complete this worksheet to help you think critically about an annotated bibliography entry.	
Article Title:	Date:
Author(s):	Is this a Quantitative Research Study? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
Journal:	Volume, Issue, Page Numbers:
Setting:	Sample:
<b>Authorship</b>	
Who wrote the article—what are his/her credentials?	
Does the author write with a bias or a certain tone?	
<b>Strength of Research Study</b>	
Was there a control group?	
If there was more than one group, were groups equally treated, except for the intervention?	

Complete document available at: <http://snipurl.com/eval-worksheet>

### General requirements to consider

- Specify what types of resources students may use and from which databases (e.g. *At least three scholarly journal articles and one book*)
- Be explicit about citation requirements (e.g. *All outside resources must be cited in APA format*)
- When offering course readings, give students the citation rather than the document itself. This encourages students to use library resources to access the articles (e.g. *Check with the library first to make sure that they own a copy of the item*)