Creating effective Information Literacy/Research Assignments

Sara Tabaei MLIS, MA,
Library Information Literacy Services Director
p: 212-463-0400 ext. 5233
sara.tabaei@touro.edu
Learning Goals

- Information Literacy (IL) and its importance
- Create and incorporate IL related Assignments
- Create better research handouts
- Assess students’ information literacy skills
What does the survey say?

N = 160

- Getting started (SQ011)
- Finding a topic for the assignment (SQ001)
- Not getting distracted (SQ013)
- Narrowing down a topic (SQ002)
- Finding scholarly articles on the library's website (SQ003)
- Determining whether an online source is credible and valid (SQ004)
- Having to sort through all the irrelevant hits on the Internet (SQ005)
- Writing and integrating different sources into my paper (SQ006)
- Knowing when I should cite a source (SQ007)
- Summarizing and paraphrasing other people's words (SQ008)
- Course-related research is not difficult (SQ009)
Information Literacy (IL): A definition

An information literate individual is able to:

- Determine the extent of information needed
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently
- Evaluate information and its sources critically
- Incorporate selected information into one’s knowledge base
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally
Importance of IL

- **College Research**
  - Choose appropriate source & material types for a given task
  - Select information and evidence on the basis of authority, currency, and credibility
  - Incorporate information from a variety of sources
  - Give credit to others for their work, contextually, and in a bibliography as appropriate
Importance of IL

Work
- Being able to search specific databases and other resources other than Google is essential
- Evaluate their findings
- Find patterns and make connections (higher-order skills)
- Produce information
- Acknowledge their sources
- Life-long learning
Importance of IL

- Life
  - The ability to know where to search for information that you need efficiently and effectively for:
    - Buying a house, a car
    - Voting
    - Medical condition
    - Finances
    - Hobbies

What other example can you think of?
Middle States and General Education @Touro

- General Education: Goal 6 = Information Literacy
- 6.1 demonstrate the ability to develop, refine and focus a topic or research question
- 6.2 demonstrate the ability to select information, from books, journals, the internet and other media
- 6.3 evaluate and apply appropriate search strategies
- 6.4 appraise the quality of sources in terms of reliability, bias, currency, and authority
- 6.5 demonstrate awareness of legal and ethical considerations in the use of information
Reading preferences according to research

- Online vs. print!
  - Online reading comprehension skills are underdeveloped
  - Differentiating between various formats of information is difficult
- For example, hard time to understand or see the difference between an ebook and an online journal article
IL assignments

- Create an Annotated Bibliography
  - [http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/01/)

- "Everything but the Paper" project that scaffolds the teaching of research and writing throughout the semester

- Compare a scholarly and a non-scholarly article on a related topic
IL assignments 2

- Find a peer review article: write a log on how you searched for it; in what database you found it, cite it in APA or any other citation style
- Find a fact or statistic in an article. Have students research it. Where did it originally come from and is it uses correctly or out of context? Why?
- Solving problems or work on case studies? (Problem-based learning or PBL)
- Write for Wikipedia
Wikipedia Assignment

- Assign groups of students to an article that they have to evaluate according to the following:
  - Biased language vs. neutral point of view (NPOV) presenting all relevant viewpoints without judging them
  - Being informative but not persuasive; being factual and objective rather than subjective and biased
Wikipedia Assignment (continued)

- Reliability of sources
- Grammar and style of writing (sloppy)
- Copyrighted material (with or without permission)
- Verifiability of sources
  - They must be found and published in another appropriate source
  - There should be no original or primary research in Wikipedia—as there is no original work in an encyclopedia
Adding technology to your assignments

- Blogging (actively blogging over a semester)
- **Digital Storytelling** (Prezi; Powerpoint; Popcorn Maker)
- Digital Games (WebQuest, Citation TIC-TAC-TOE)
- Infographics (locating, evaluating, synthesizing and communicating information) Canva, Easle.ly, Piktochart
- **Concept mapping** (sometimes called a mind map)
Project Information
Literacy: Handout Study

Handout Study: Youtube Video
## Research Guidance Rubric for Assignment Design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guidance Level (0)</th>
<th>Guidance Level (1)</th>
<th>Guidance Level (2)</th>
<th>Guidance Level (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanation and/or Definition of Sources and Expectations</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The assignment does not describe or explain sourcing expectations.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some general guidelines for evaluating a source’s appropriateness to the assignment are given.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexact quantities are given for the required number of sources (e.g. “several” or “an adequate number”).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods and tools for resource discovery are described in general terms (e.g. “Use the library.”)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All relevant qualities of acceptable sources are listed (e.g. peer-reviewed/journal / trade, primary/secondary, qualitative/quantitative, recency.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The required number of sources is stated as a number or range of numbers.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods and tools for resource discovery are described by broad type (e.g. “use a library database that includes scholarly articles.”)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All relevant qualities of acceptable sources are listed and clearly defined.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The required number of sources is given as a range or the assignment gives a clear expectation of how students will know if they have an adequate number of sources.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods and tools for resource discovery are discussed and/or demonstrated in detail.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Rationale and Context for Resource Requirements** |
| Resource requirements are neither linked to the assignment’s learning objectives nor given any context-dependence. |
| Resource requirements are described as having learning value (e.g., “It’s important that these requirements are met.”) |
| Contextual exceptions to the resource requirements are mentioned as possible. |
| Each resource requirement is linked to the assignment’s stated learning objectives. |
| Contextually exceptional sourcing scenarios are discussed hypothetically. |
| Students are invited to discuss any unique sourcing circumstances with the professor and/or librarian. |

| **Process Orientation** |
| The assignment doesn’t address the process of research, only the final product. |
| The assignment acknowledges and perhaps even describes the research process but includes no components that require effort by the student. |
| Assignment includes at least one component that requires students to make the process of research explicit and is |
| Process components require students to apply information literacy skills as those delineated in the ILCCS and |
Various Assessment Methods

- Rubrics
- Pre and post tests
- Concept maps
- One minute papers
- Evaluating sources students use in their papers
- Citing sources and avoiding plagiarism
Library Resources

- Services for students
- LibGuides
  - Faculty
    - Guide to Effective Research Assignments
    - Keys to designing effective writing and research assignments
- ProQuest Research Companion (PQRC)
- Embedded Librarian project
Thank you!

- If you have any suggestions for a new class, please contact me.

- Contact information:
  - p: 212-463-0400 ext. 5233
  - sara.tabaei@touro.edu