



# Critically Analyzing Information: What do first-year students need to know?

**University Library System: Leslie Poljak, Diana Dill, Marian Hampton, & Berenika Webster**

**Background:** Each year, the University Library System (ULS) provides over 70 library sessions to students enrolled in FP0001: Introduction to the Arts and Sciences. These sessions present a valuable opportunity to introduce foundational library and information literacy skills to first-year students that can be applied to almost any academic endeavor. Project leaders utilized evidence based curriculum development to create a more relevant and engaging 2017 library session, going beyond the traditional library orientation.

## Assessment Collection, Data, and Impact

### 2016 Library Assignment Scores A sampling of 200 submitted student assignments indicated:



**91.2%** were competent in **keyword searching**



**89.6%** were able to **find a book** on the shelf



**86.8%** were able to examine and **compare information** from various sources in order to **evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias**

#### Impact on the 2017 Lesson:

- Less focus on keyword development and finding materials
- More focus on comparing and analyzing information sources

**HEDS (Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium) Research Practices Survey:** HEDS Consortium, is an independent not-for-profit corporation. The survey collects information on students' research experiences and assesses their information literacy skills.

The 2016 Library Class Information Literacy Indicators related to the HEDS survey were:

- Deciding which information is relevant for the assignment
- Knowing when to cite
- Knowing how to cite
- Knowing the best techniques for using resources to find information
- Deciding what resources to search for information (database, search engines, etc.)
- Evaluating information for credibility, bias, authority, and appropriateness for the assignment
- Selecting a topic

#### Impact on the 2017 Lesson:

- These indicators were used to survey FP0001 instructors

**2016 FP0001 Instructor Survey**  
According to FP0001 instructor respondents, the **top four information literacy skills first-year students lack are:**

**83.3%** **Evaluating information** for credibility, bias, authority, and appropriateness for the assignment



**52.1%** Deciding what resources to **search for information** (databases, search engines, etc.)



**47.9%** Knowing **when** to cite



**39.6%** Knowing **how** to cite

#### Impact on the 2017 Lesson:

- A re-designed lesson focusing on identifying information need and finding the resources to support various information needs
- A new handout including information about when and how to cite

### What is Information Literacy?

The *American Library Association* defines Information Literacy 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."

These standards have been developed into a framework with 6 threshold concepts. The threshold concept that most closely relates to the FP0001 library sessions is *Authority is Constructed and Contextual*.

### Summary and Future Plans

Through this assessment, improvements to the lesson not only allowed for more class time to focus on evaluating information, but introduced students to a wider variety of information sources while encouraging them to think critically about how they seek and understand information.

A similar process for the 2017 lesson has begun, seeking instructor feedback on current lesson information literacy objectives and presentation, as well as student performance with the updated lesson.

### Recommended readings:

Association of College & Research Libraries. (2015). *Framework for Information Literacy in Higher Education*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>

Schaub, G., McClure, H. A., & Bravender, P. (2015). *Teaching Information Literacy Threshold Concepts : Lesson Plans for Librarians*. Chicago, Illinois: Association of College and Research Libraries.

The University of Tennessee Chattanooga. "Google Bucket | UTC Library." Retrieved from: <https://www.utc.edu/library/services/instruction/teaching-materials/google-bucket.php>