Information Literacy and Political Efficacy: Assessing the Correlation

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Information Literacy and Political Efficacy: Assessing the Correlation

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Hypothesis:
Information literacy skills and levels of political efficacy are related. An increase in one will correlate with an increase in the other.

Political efficacy is related to increased political participation.
The Project

1. Integrate information literacy skills overtly in selected political science classes
2. Measure information literacy skills
3. Measure political efficacy
4. Look at possible correlation
Information Literacy in Assignments

Worked with a librarian to incorporate IL elements into assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOW</th>
<th>Determine the extent of information needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACCESS</td>
<td>Access the needed information effectively and efficiently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVALUATE</td>
<td>Evaluate information and its sources critically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USE</td>
<td>Incorporate selected information into one’s knowledge base; Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USE ETHICALLY</td>
<td>Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally</td>
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(ACRL, 2000, [http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency](http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency))
Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education

These standards were reviewed by the ACRL Standards Committee and approved by the Board of Directors of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) on January 18, 2000, at the Midwinter Meeting of the American Library Association in San Antonio, Texas. These standards were also endorsed by the American Association for Higher Education (October 1999) and the Council of Independent Colleges (February 2004). A PDF of this document is available.

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Introduction

Information Literacy Defined

Information Literacy in Assignments

Standards, Performance Indicators, and Outcomes

Standard One
The information literate student determines the nature and extent of the information needed.

Performance Indicators:

1. The information literate student defines and articulates the need for information.

   Outcomes Include:
   a. Confers with instructors and participates in class discussions, peer workgroups, and electronic discussions to identify a research topic, or other information need
   b. Develops a thesis statement and formulates questions based on the information need
   c. Explores general information sources to increase familiarity with the topic
   d. Defines or modifies the information need to achieve a manageable focus
   e. Identifies key concepts and terms that describe the information need
   f. Recognizes that existing information can be combined with original thought, experimentation, and/or analysis to produce new information

2. The information literate student identifies a variety of types and formats of potential sources for information.

   Outcomes Include:
   a. Knows how information is formally and informally produced, organized, and disseminated
   b. Recognizes that knowledge can be organized into disciplines that influence the way information is accessed
   c. Identifies the value and differences of potential resources in a variety of formats (e.g., multimedia, database, website, data set, audio/visual, book)
   d. Identifies the purpose and audience of potential resources (e.g., popular vs. scholarly, current vs. historical)
   e. Differentiates between primary and secondary sources, recognizing how their use and importance vary with each discipline
   f. Realizes that information may need to be constructed with raw data from primary sources

**Discussion Assignment #1:**

**Explore a topic**

Explore the following resources to locate a policy issue of interest to you... (On the Issues; Fact Check; Pro Con; etc.)

**Identify your pre-conceived ideas about this issue and describe your experience of researching the issue.** Did it impact your feelings? Were you surprised by any of your findings? Explain and defend your position with facts...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>IL standards/outcomes addressed</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.5</strong> The information literate student determines whether the new knowledge has an impact on the individual’s value system and takes steps to reconcile differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3.4 g</strong> Selects information that provides evidence for the topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion Assignment #2: Political parties, Policies, Ideology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe the influence of political parties and political ideology on your policy issue.... Is your policy issue addressed appropriately on the parties’ websites? <strong>How do the concepts of political ideology discussed in class align with the positions expressed on the political party websites?</strong> ...</td>
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### Discussion Assignment #3: Lobbyists

Review the websites listed under "lobbying" ...compare and contrast the information found on the various websites.

What influence do you think lobbyists have on your policy issue? ...identify any companies that may influence legislation on your policy issue. **How might the interest groups relating to your policy issue influence the legislature and/or party members?**

### IL standards/outcomes addressed

**3.2** The information literate student articulates and applies initial criteria for evaluating both the information and its sources.

**Outcomes Include:**
- Recognizes prejudice, deception, or manipulation
- Recognizes the cultural, physical, or other context within which the information was created...
Hybrid (Web) Assignment #1

| Strategize which keywords you will use... Obtain background information plus 4 current event articles and 1 scholarly article. Compose a 2-3 page paper summarizing your overall policy issue. Include a summary/analysis of each source. Reflect on your experience of researching your selected policy issue and indicate how (if) your understanding of the issue has changed, expanded or developed... |

| The information literate student 2.2 b) Identifies keywords, synonyms... 1.1 c) Explores general information ...to increase familiarity with topic 3.1 summarizes the main ideas to be extracted from the information... 3.4 compares new knowledge with prior knowledge to determine the value added, contradictions, or other unique characteristics... |
## Information Literacy in Assignments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hybrid (Web) assignment #2</th>
<th>IL standards/outcomes addressed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strategize what additional information you will need ...based on discussion board feedback from your peers and instructor... Locate 2 updated articles related to your selected policy issue...</td>
<td>The information literate student <strong>1.4</strong> reevaluates the nature and extent of the information need... Reviews the initial information need to clarify...or refine the question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>..evaluate all of the sources you have acquired using the CRAAP test. Justify the legitimacy of each of your sources.</td>
<td><strong>3.2</strong> Examines and compares information...in order to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect on your experience of researching your policy issue ...</td>
<td><strong>3.4</strong> compares new knowledge with prior knowledge...</td>
</tr>
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</table>
### Group web assignments:

**Group Web Presentations, “Meet Your Congressmen” and “Executive Agencies”**: Included the specific information literacy skill, *evaluate information and its sources critically*, by asking students to assess political websites (of both elected officials and government agencies) for content, “navigability, appearance, and value of information” and present their assessment to the class.

### IL standards/outcomes addressed

**3.2** The information literate student articulates and applies initial criteria for evaluating both the information and its sources.

**Outcomes Include:**

- Examines and compares information from various sources in order to evaluate reliability, validity, accuracy, authority, timeliness, and point of view or bias.
Information Literacy Session

• Political science information landscape: types of sources

• Background information

• Using academic journals

• Web Evaluation: CRAAP test
• QEP focusing on information literacy: 2007-2012

• The university adopted the five IL standards set forth by ACRL.

• Institutional Support
  – Leaders in Information Literacy Grants
  – Office of Institutional Research supported this project through funding and administering the assessments.
The Information Literacy Test (ILT) developed by James Madison University in 2004.

- The test measures four of the five standards of information literacy.

- Several studies have confirmed the reliability and validity of the test among college students.

- Procedures for test administration.
Political Efficacy Instrument

• What is political efficacy? *internal vs. external*

• High levels of political efficacy are correlated with increased political participation.

**Standards for measuring political efficacy**

– **PE1:** I consider myself well qualified to participate in politics.
– **PE2:** I feel I have a pretty good understanding of the political issues facing our country.
– **PE3:** I think that I am as well informed about politics and government as most people my age.
– **PE4:** I believe that public officials care about what people of my generation think.
– **PE5:** I believe people like me have a say in what government does.
Initial Results

• ILT class (n=57) vs. control group (n=30)

• ILT Class results
  – KNOW (significant increase)
  – EVALUATE (significant decrease)
  – Significant increases in PE1 and PE3.

• Control Group Results
  – No significant difference (EVALUATE tended toward significance).
  – Significant increase in PE2.
  – Significant decrease in PE4.

• Effect Size
Moving Forward

• Additional analysis is needed to further compare the groups.

• Examine the results to assess the current assignments in POLS 1101.
  – Concern over the decrease in EVALUATE standard in both groups.
Implications for Disciplines

• Possible correlation of Information Literacy skills on other discipline-specific goals and outcomes

• Can use IL outcomes within discipline-specific assignments to build discipline knowledge and IL at same time

• May build throughout curriculum of a major
References


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