

Moravian College and Theological Seminary

INFORMATION LITERACY INITIATIVE

The Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) defines information literacy and the skills it encompasses in the following way:

Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It 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. An information literate individual is able to do all of the following:

- 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.

Association of College & Research Libraries. *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education*. Chicago: ACRL, 2000.

We are framing these essential skills in terms of three levels of competency. Our goal is to work cooperatively with the faculty to help students gain mastery of these skills.

Basic Competencies

- Define a research need
 - Formulate a research topic
 - Determine an information need
- Plan and execute a search for information
 - Identify key terms and concepts
 - Identify the most appropriate sources of information
 - Use Boolean operators and truncation where appropriate
 - Impose limiters (e.g., scholarly vs. popular, date, language)
 - Modify the search based on search results
 - Recognize the differences between scholarly and popular sources
- Know how and where to find the sources discovered in the search process
 - Determine which sources the library owns or provides access to and retrieve them
 - Request material not owned by the library on Interlibrary Loan
 - Locate material faculty may have put on reserve in the library
- Understand the obligation to credit sources and be able to do so in an appropriate citation style

Intermediate Competencies

- Make use of controlled vocabulary (subject headings)
- Understand the way that knowledge is generated
 - Know the difference between a primary and secondary source and how to search effectively for each one
 - Know the difference between fee-based Web material and the free Web
- Judge the relevance of a source to a research topic
- Know the basics of Web searching and evaluation
 - Know the difference between a search engine and a directory
 - Be familiar with one high quality search engine
 - Be able to do simple Web searches
 - Know how to broaden and narrow a Web search
 - Recognize the differences among the major domains (.com, .edu, .org, .gov)

Advanced Competencies

- Understand the more sophisticated searching capabilities of the online catalog, databases and indexes, and the Web
- Be familiar with the most important print and online resources in a discipline
- Be able to identify the most appropriate sources to meet any information need
- Understand the nature of the Web and the ways it differs from other information sources
- Master sophisticated evaluation skills, particularly regarding sources found on the Web
- Understand the ethics of and legal responsibility for the use of information
 - Know what intellectual property is and its place in copyright law
 - Know how censorship and freedom of speech are applied in a society
 - Be aware of the privacy and security issues surrounding the use of the Web
 - Be aware of the issues surrounding the use of human subjects in research