Top Ten Information Literacy Skills
Are your students college ready?

It’s day one of college and your student has been asked to write a research paper. Does she know what information is needed? Will she know where to find it? Can she explain it to others?

College is a time for learning new things, but students can’t begin to learn if they aren’t equipped with fundamental research skills before graduating high school. Those skills – known as information literacy – help students to locate, correctly evaluate, successfully use and clearly communicate information in its various formats.

Beyond writing papers, information literacy is crucial for success at every stage of a person’s academic and professional life. As a librarian, you play a critical role in teaching those skills to students so that they are college and career ready.

So what do students need to know? Here at the College of Information and Communication at the University of South Carolina – home of the Bachelor’s of Science in Information Science degree – we are all about information and preparing students for careers in the information age. That’s why we’ve collaborated with librarians in the Thomas Cooper Library to provide you with a recommended list of top ten information literacy skills for high school students entering USC.

Top Ten Information Literacy Skills

1. Know when information is required
   Students should to be able to determine when information and research is needed for a specific assignment or academic task.

2. Know how to write a research question
   Once students know what information is required, they should understand how to formulate a research question.

3. Know where to find information
   After receiving instruction from librarians and classroom teachers, students should be able to locate quality materials in the library and online.
4. Determine/understand sources of information

Students should understand where information comes from. For example, would an assignment be best served by using a book, article, website, or newspaper article, and knowing the difference between each?

5. Select the best source

Having sought out sources of information, students should be able to determine which ones are the best.

6. Use the information

After they have selected quality information sources, students should be able to use the information to complete the assignment, task, or project.

7. Organize information

The student should be able to decide how to compile and consolidate all of this information. The school librarian is there to train the student in this task.

8. Present information

Whether it is a paper, presentation, or project, there is always an outcome to information seeking. Students should be able to present a quality presentation or product.

9. Evaluate information

Students should be able to look back on their work to see what was successful and what could have been improved. What additional information could be located in the future, what information seeking behaviors could be changed?

10. Use information in an ethical manner

Students must know how to cite and use their information in a fair and ethical manner. Librarians are educated in intellectual property rights, acceptable use policies, and intellectual freedom. They are the experts in your schools for training students in using information ethically, fairly, and legally.
The Carolina Core

All University of South Carolina undergraduates share a common academic foundation: the Carolina Core. The Carolina Core develops skills in communication, analytical reasoning and problem-solving, scientific literacy, information literacy and the arts. Topics in global citizenship and multicultural understanding as well as values, ethics and social responsibility are also explored. The competencies are:

1. Effective, Engaged and Persuasive Communication (Written):
   Students must be able to identify and analyze issues, develop logical and persuasive arguments, and communicate ideas clearly for a variety of audiences and purposes through writing and speaking.

2. Analytical Reasoning and Problem Solving:
   Students must be able to apply the methods of mathematical, statistical, and analytical reasoning to critically evaluate data, solve problems, and effectively communicate findings verbally and graphically.

3. Scientific Literacy:
   Students must be able to apply the principles and language of the natural sciences and associated technologies to historical and contemporary issues.

4. Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding (Foreign Language):
   Students must be able to communicate effectively in more than one language.

5. Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding (Historical Thinking):
   Students must be able to use the principles of historical thinking to understand past human societies.
6. Global Citizenship and Multicultural Understanding (Social Sciences):
Students must be able to use the principles of the social sciences to explore diverse cultural identities and to analyze political and environmental issues.

7. Aesthetic and Interpretive Understanding:
Students must be able to create or interpret literary, visual, or performing arts.

8. Effective, Engaged and Persuasive Communication (Spoken):
Students must able to identify and analyze issues, develop logical and persuasive arguments, and communicate ideas clearly for a variety of audiences and purposes through writing and speaking.

9. Information Literacy:
Students must be able to collect, manage, and evaluate information using technology, and communicate findings.

10. Values, Ethics, and Social Responsibility:
Students must be able to examine different kinds of social and personal values, analyzing the ways in which these are manifested in communities as well as individual lives.

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