Information Literacy as Transdisciplinary in the Florida State College Curriculum

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Creating a Research Course for Business

Creating statewide information literacy research strategies courses for college students has become a strategic and multi-disciplinary endeavor for the Florida College System's statewide Information Literacy Curriculum Committee. In 2016, just after the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) *Standards* (2000) were rescinded and the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* was adopted (2016), the statewide curriculum committee for Florida Colleges was charged with developing and expanding information literacy research courses aligned with the new ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (ALA, 2015). These courses are created with the understanding that they are intended to be integrated across the state college disciplinary curriculum. The most recent research strategies course the committee is developing is specifically designed to address information literacy and research for business. The *Research Strategies for Business* course integrates content such as business databases, relevant business sources on the web, finding, evaluating and citing financial information, economics and statistics, and working with both current and historical business information.

Process and Methods

The committee utilized the concepts of *Understanding by Design* (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005) and its "backward design" methodology to develop learning outcomes based on the newly adopted ACRL *Framework.* Mapping selected knowledge practices and dispositions to the type of course content pertinent to a basic research competency course was employed to connect key learning outcomes directly to corresponding *Frames* as identified and described below:

- **Authority Is Constructed and Contextual**
  Information resources reflect their creators' expertise and credibility and are evaluated based on the information need and the context in which the information will be used. Authority is constructed in that various communities may recognize different types of authority. It is contextual in that the information need may help to determine the level of authority required.
- **Information Creation as a Process**
  Information in any format is produced to convey a message and is shared via a selected delivery method. The iterative processes of researching, creating, revising, and disseminating information vary, and the resulting product reflects these differences.
- **Information Has Value**
  Information possesses several dimensions of value, including as a commodity, as a means of education, as a means to influence, and as a means of negotiating and understanding the world. Legal and socio-economic interests influence information production and dissemination.
- **Research as Inquiry**
  Research is iterative and depends upon asking increasingly complex or new questions whose answers, in turn, develop additional questions or lines of inquiry in any field.

- **Scholarship as Conversation**
  Communities of scholars, researchers, or professionals engage in sustained discourse with new insights and discoveries occurring over time as a result of varied perspectives and interpretations.
- **Searching as Strategic Exploration**
  Searching for information is often nonlinear and iterative, requiring the evaluation of a range of information sources and the mental flexibility to pursue alternate avenues as new understanding develops (American Library Association, 2015).

The revised research strategies for college students' courses include new course titles, course descriptions, course level learning outcomes, and course level learning objectives. The course consists of six modules, each with identified working learning objectives and assessments mapped to the *Framework*. (See the full progression of committee work - [Curriculum Committee update reports](#).)

Here is the current list and sequence for the basic research strategies course modules with learning outcomes that has proved to be transdisciplinary across the newly developed discipline-specific courses, such as *Research Strategies for Business*.

Module 1: Plagiarism
Frames: **Information Has Value, Scholarship as Conversation**
After completing this lesson, you will be able to:
- Understand why and how to use and build upon the scholarship of others while giving appropriate credit to the creators
- Recognize plagiarism and the consequences of plagiarizing
- Understand how to avoid plagiarism by paraphrasing, quoting, and adhering to a citation style

Module 2: Topic Selection/Keywords
Frames: **Research as Inquiry, Searching as Strategic Exploration**
After completing this lesson, you will be able to:
- Formulate a research topic
- Develop a thesis statement or research question
- Generate keywords and synonyms from the thesis statement or research question

Module 3: Information Cycle/Source Types
Frames: **Searching as Strategic Exploration, Authority Is Constructed and Contextual**
After completing this module, you will be able to:
- Explain the information cycle timeline and identify the source types available for each stage of the cycle
- Evaluate sources by the medium of delivery and the nature of the information need

Module 4: Source Evaluation (establishing authority)
Frames: **Authority Is Constructed and Contextual**
After completing this lesson, you will be able to:
- Recognize different kinds of authority

- Evaluate sources by considering rationale, authority, (publication) date, accuracy, and Relevance

Module 5: Library Databases
Frames: **Searching as Strategic Exploration, Information Has Value, Research as Inquiry**, **Scholarship as Conversation**
After completing this lesson, you will be able to:
- Identify the basic features of a library database
- Describe the benefits and uses of a library database
- Develop a search strategy using the previously-determined keywords and the features of the library database
- Use a library database to locate articles on your research topic
- Determine the appropriate subject terms for your research topic

Module 6: Documentation (the value of information)
Frames: **Information Has Value, Authority Is Constructed and Contextual**, **Information Creation as a Process**
After completing this lesson, you will be able to:
- Classify different citation types used for various subject areas
- Identify the publication information necessary for creating a citation or attribution statement
- Create a reference citation in APA style or a Works Cited end citation in MLA style
- Locate resources to aid in proper paper formatting and use of in-text citations to adhere to APA or MLA style
- Understand how to avoid copyright infringement when using text, images, photos, audio and video clips, and other media

Transdisciplinary Information Literacy Modules
With the groundwork in place, the committee was asked to develop a research strategies course for health sciences, a news literacy module, and most recently a research strategies course for business. The business course, as with the other courses, maintains the basic learning objectives but is aligned to the discipline of business and the pertinent content for college students in both two-year or baccalaureate business programs.

The research strategies for health science course has taken a landmark position in the transdisciplinary approach to integrating information literacy across the curriculum. This course is now required in the curriculum for the Bachelor of Science Health Science program at Seminole State College of Florida and was assigned its own unique course prefix and number to be fully integrated into the program sequence. The introduction of information literacy as transdisciplinary into the curriculum indicates the recognition of academic librarians and library instruction as essential to education across disciplines in higher education. This transdisciplinary and scaffolded approach to using information to learn - or the notion of informed learning (Bruce, 2008; Bruce & Hughes, 2010; Maybee, Bruce, Lupton & Rebmann, 2013), creates more intentional pathways for students to cross new thresholds of understanding of information literacy competencies as they engage with discipline-specific content. We are hopeful that the new course for business will follow a similar path to being incorporated at the program level of

curriculum integration for both the AA and AS students interested in business and as integrated into the core curriculum for business-related bachelor's programs across the state.

The transition to the ACRL *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* has provided a new pathway for information literacy to situate itself as transdisciplinary and build towards new understandings of intentional integration of these competencies into the business curriculum at a programmatic level. This idea of crossing thresholds of understandings in disciplinary content while using or applying information literacy content to learn can be transformative for our students. This opportunity addresses some of the very current topics today of diversity and inclusion, building on a student's knowledge base, and making digital literacies and real-world scenarios more explicit, which means making information literacy part of an integrated curriculum more relevant than ever before (Kaufmann, 2018).

References

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