

## Grand Valley State University Libraries

### Information Literacy Core Competencies

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Information Literacy is a set of skills which includes finding information effectively, thinking critically about resources, synthesizing & incorporating information into one's knowledge base, creatively expressing & effectively communicating new knowledge, using information ethically, and using knowledge to better society.

Although the term Information Literacy is most prevalent in the context of libraries, its philosophy is embedded in all environments of learning. This document is an attempt to clarify these concepts in a manner that would include the broader academic community. To that end, information literacy concepts defined in this document were mapped wherever possible to General Education Program outcomes. Every effort was made to use inclusive language and to make concepts applicable to any academic discipline. A scaffolding hierarchy was used throughout this document; skills goal outcomes are intended to build upon one another.

Skills Goals	Outcomes
<p><b>I. Construct a question or problem statement</b> Able to articulate need for existing information and literature and develop a research question.</p>	<p><i>General Education and Basic Skills Courses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Define the topic and the information needed</li><li>▪ Seek information beyond course materials as necessary</li><li>▪ Develop a manageable focus appropriate to criteria of assignment</li></ul> <p><i>Major Program:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Actively and independently seek sources beyond course materials</li><li>▪ Articulate research question within confines/context of discipline</li><li>▪ Use discipline-specific terminology</li></ul> <p><i>Graduate Programs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Develop an original research question which contributes to the body of knowledge in the field</li></ul>

<p><b>II. Locate and Gather Information</b>  Able to execute a plan for locating information by developing a search strategy and identifying sources of information</p>	<p><i>General Education and Basic Skills Courses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a plan for searching</li> <li>▪ Identify various sources of help in searching, including librarians, library services faculty, and peers</li> <li>▪ Identify sources of information inside and outside of the library</li> <li>▪ Develop awareness of information lifecycle and ability to determine which types of information are appropriate for topic</li> </ul> <p><i>Major Program:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify major primary and secondary sources of information in the field and articulate when each is appropriate to use</li> <li>▪ Use recursive searching techniques</li> <li>▪ Become familiar with core subject resources in discipline</li> <li>▪ Know how to interpret citations and how to use citations to guide research</li> </ul> <p><i>Graduate Programs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Seek primary sources from seminal theorists and practitioners</li> </ul>
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<p><b>III. Evaluate Sources</b> Able to evaluate the quality, usefulness, and relevance of the information they discover</p>	<p><i>General Education and Basic Skills Courses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Know the difference between scholarly and popular sources</li> <li>▪ Evaluate resources for authority, accuracy, reliability, coverage, and timeliness</li> <li>▪ Evaluate found resources for relevance to the topic</li> </ul> <p><i>Major Program:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify possible biases within an information source</li> <li>▪ Seek feedback from peers and instructors</li> <li>▪ Make use of review tools to evaluate information sources (e.g., book reviews, annotated bibliographies, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Judges a source's ability to fit the criteria of a given assignment</li> </ul> <p><i>Graduate Programs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Know the difference between types of research (e.g., qualitative, quantitative, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Evaluate research methodology</li> <li>▪ Identify research biases within studies</li> <li>▪ Apply evaluation criteria in the identification and use of key sources of information (e.g., journal impact factors)</li> </ul>
<p><b>IV. Manage Information and Communicate Knowledge</b> Able to manage and synthesize information from a variety of sources in order to communicate content effectively</p>	<p><i>General Education and Basic Skills Courses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a strategy for logging and retrieving information found</li> <li>▪ Synthesize information from various sources</li> </ul> <p><i>Major Program</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use a citation management system (e.g., RefWorks or EndNote)</li> <li>▪ Awareness of associations and networks related to the discipline for networking and scholarly communication</li> </ul> <p><i>Graduate Programs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use current awareness tools (e.g., RSS feeds, blogs, listservs)</li> <li>▪ Preserve/archive research, data, portfolio, thesis or project</li> </ul>

<p><b>V. Use Information Ethically</b> Understand the legal and ethical implications of using information appropriately and responsibly</p>	<p><i>General Education and Basic Skills Courses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understand the basics of plagiarism and copyright</li> <li>▪ Cite sources appropriately</li> </ul> <p><i>Major Program:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop an increasing awareness of information ethics, types of plagiarism and responsible use of information</li> <li>▪ Recognize ethical and legal considerations specific to the discipline</li> <li>▪ Understand how to use information ethically as global and local citizens</li> <li>▪ Use government information to foster informed citizenry</li> </ul> <p><i>Graduate Programs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attentive to issues in the field and aware of how research will address those issues</li> <li>▪ Share findings with peers in open forums</li> </ul>
<p><b>VI. Develop Subject Knowledge</b> Understand the disciplinary and societal context in which information is presented and created, and is able to contribute to that body of information</p>	<p><i>General Education and Basic Skills Courses:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be aware of subject-specific resources (e.g., subject guides, subject-specific databases, liaison librarians, etc. )</li> </ul> <p><i>Major Program:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comprehend the academic process in specific disciplines</li> <li>▪ Consult with university subject experts (e.g., instructors, librarians, software specialists, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Use advanced subject-search features in research databases</li> <li>▪ Be able to select a breadth of discipline-specific materials (e.g., scholarly journals, trade publications, books, government information, web-based resources, etc.)</li> <li>▪ Be familiar with post-graduate resources to foster professional membership, leadership and community involvement</li> <li>▪ Be familiar with primary sources</li> </ul> <p><i>Graduate Programs:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Be familiar with seminal works and experts in field</li> <li>▪ Be able to articulate the standards of the field</li> <li>▪ Contributes to associations &amp; networks related to the discipline</li> </ul>

## Influences

The Information Literacy Competencies Committee drew inspiration and guidance from diverse sources, ranging from GVSU's general education program guidelines to UCLA's published IL competencies, and many other articles, rubrics, standards, and e-mails along the way.

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