

Performance Assessment

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From the “Liberal Studies First Year” (LSFY) skills matrix: Information Literacy

LSFY 101	LSFY 102	LSFY 103
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Describe how information is organized -Distinguish among different forms of information (books, articles, newspapers, and web materials) -Use reference materials to select a topic and to locate reliable background information -Examine the use of indexes, databases, and bibliographies when searching for information -Search for books and/or chapters/essays in books in ALiCat and I-Share -Distinguish between popular and scholarly materials -Define a research question -Develop keywords for a simple search and use subject headings to expand the search -Explain why sources must be cited and demonstrate familiarity with MLA citation style 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Identify the means of accessing print and electronic information -Use bibliographical information to advance research -Determine which forms of information are appropriate for a research topic -Determine when interlibrary loan is appropriate and know how to use it -Distinguish between primary and secondary materials and determine which kind of source is needed for a topic -Select relevant popular and/or scholarly materials based on research needs -Formulate a search strategy using mapping concepts and/or subject headings -Consider the authority, bias, currency and relevance of all resources -Format references appropriately in in-text citations and bibliographies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Master the research tools available for information retrieval -Refine a research question by employing advanced search strategies in subject-specific databases -Gather the appropriate sources through a combination of consulting bibliographies, searching catalogs and databases, and chasing cited references -Evaluate resources based on authority, bias, currency, and relevance and effectively integrate them into research -Use a citation style appropriate to the task

The IL skills we chose to assess:

LSFY 101	LSFY 102	LSFY 103
<p>-Describe how information is organized -Distinguish among different forms of information</p> <p>Use reference materials to select a topic and to locate reliable background information</p> <p>and bibliographies when searching for information -Search for books and/or chapters/essays in books in ALiCat and I-Share -Distinguish between popular and scholarly materials</p> <p>Distinguish between popular and scholarly materials</p> <p>-Explain why sources must be cited and demonstrate familiarity with MLA citation style</p>	<p>-Identify the means of accessing print and electronic information</p> <p>Determine which forms of information are appropriate for a research topic</p> <p>-Distinguish between popular and scholarly materials and determine which kind of source is needed for a topic -Select relevant popular and/or scholarly materials based on research needs -Formulate a search strategy using mapping concepts and/or subject headings -Consider the authority, bias, currency and relevance of all resources -Format references appropriately in in-text citations and bibliographies</p>	<p>-Master the research tools available for subject-specific databases</p> <p>Refine a research question by employing advanced search strategies in subject-specific databases</p> <p>chasing cited references -Evaluate resources based on authority, bias, currency, and relevance and effectively integrate them into research -Use a citation style appropriate to the task</p>

Identify an information literacy skill to assess.

“Use reference materials to select a topic and to locate reliable background information.”

Design a common activity targeted to that skill.

“Using the Reference Collection” asks students to:

- articulate a topic/area
- use Library of Congress classification to locate two materials
- explore those materials and write a short summary
- move outside of Reference to find additional resources on the same topic

Deliver an instruction session designed to teach students the targeted skill.

Have a faculty member model the activity.

Hold a class discussion about what reference materials are and how they are different from other library materials.

Review and chart students' completed performance assessments.

The librarians meet to compare their teaching methods and results, to identify trends in student understanding of the skill, and to brainstorm more effective methods of teaching the skill in the future.

Results of the Assessment Project

Students *most easily* learned skills such as:

- Navigating Library of Congress classification
- Locating on-topic articles in databases
- Employing database limiters
- (By the end of the year), deciphering new or unfamiliar databases

Results of the Assessment Project

Students were *most challenged* by skills such as:

- Using research to shape/inform the development of topics and research questions
- Selecting the best sources from among several on-topic options. For example:
 - Determining source type beyond the database record (e.g., research vs. review articles)
 - Evaluating sources' purpose/arguments

New Information Literacy Outcomes

- **LSFY101:** Exploratory research to generate ideas and questions
- **LSFY102:** Evaluating sources based on the research need
- **LSFY103:** Synthesizing diverse sources to develop and address a research question

Sample In-Class Activity

LSFY103 Outcome: Synthesizing diverse sources to develop and address a research question

Lesson:

1. Identify an initial, broad topic or question
2. Locate two initial sources on the topic
3. Write a reflective paragraph about how those sources developed thinking about the topic

For more information:

Bluemle, Stefanie R., Amanda Makula, and Margaret Rogal. "Learning by Doing: Performance Assessment of Information Literacy Across the First-Year Curriculum." *College & Undergraduate Libraries* 20.3/4 2013.