

Information Literacy at River University

Rivier University Core Mission:

Founded in 1933 by the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary and Sister Madeleine of Jesus, Rivier University is a Catholic institution of higher education dedicated to transforming hearts and minds to serve the world.

Library Mission (brief version):

The Rivier University Libraries support the educational mission of Rivier University in its efforts to: 'educate the whole person in the context of an academic community that cultivates critical thought, sound judgment and respect for all people.' The Libraries provide resources and services to foster academic excellence in the Rivier University community. They seek to empower its community members to become lifelong learners and discerning consumers of information.

Rivier University Libraries Information Literacy Program Vision:

Our vision is that every Rivier student will be able to seek and use information effectively and responsibly during their academic years and beyond.

ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education

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. **Summary: People publish or post information and have varying levels of knowledge and reliability. You choose information sources differently depending on why you need the information.**

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. **Summary: No two people find, write, edit and share information the same way, even if the processes seem the same. Your reasons for and method of sharing information and your intended audience will guide your process.**

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 socioeconomic interests influence information production and dissemination. **Summary: Information is important for different reasons, and the method and cost of providing it and accessing it depends on who produces and distributes it and who needs it, and why.**

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. **Summary: The basics of searching are often the same no matter what information you need, and the questions that come up as you search may lead you in new directions.**

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. **Summary: People who write, produce, and post information, as well as those who seek it, are part of a give and take about that information.**

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. **Summary: As you look for and find information you may end up changing where and how you're searching, and repeating as you think of new possibilities.**

Information literacy practices and habits of mind, adapted from the ACRL Framework, for students at Rivier University

Undergraduate first year seminar and sophomore humanities core course:

Students begin to:

--identify and evaluate the information needed for an assignment, and learn how to form questions that will begin their research.

--recognize that brainstorming and browsing are valuable aids to defining an information need.

--learn that research is a process, and be able to adjust their search as they begin to assess the information available in terms of their information need. This may include learning to turn a question into search terms, changing the focus of their research based on their initial results, asking new questions that may lead them in different directions, using limiters to hone their results, trying a variety of search terms, and considering different information formats.

--become familiar with different information formats and sources and how to access them, including print and online reference materials, journals, books, and other media, library materials (such as LibGuides) and web resources, and begin to evaluate when and how to use these.

-- understand how to evaluate the credibility of information sources, including the identity, perceived authority and expertise, purpose and perspective of those who have created or produced the information they find.

--understand the issues related to searching and interacting online, and the ways that the commodification of their personal information impacts the information they receive.

-- understand issues of access or lack of access to information. Students may begin to think about underrepresented views, how and why some information is privileged, who may be impacted by that, and what their role is as information consumers and creators. Students will seek different perspectives and begin to understand their own privilege and biases, and value keeping an open mind as part of the research process.

-- see themselves, as students, as part of the information ecosystem, mainly as consumers, but also as creators of information such as their seminar presentations and papers.

-- understand the ethical and legal use of information – that information, including open access materials, should be attributed and cited, and that decisions about what information to include or exclude matter.

In undergraduate junior year seminars, upper level research courses, and “one shot” library instruction for courses in undergraduate and graduate programs:

In addition to gaining more advanced understanding of the skills listed above, students will be able to:

-- understand and evaluate authoritative sources in their fields – the databases and open access sources relevant to their fields of study, the authoritative publishers, authors, and experts in those fields, and the authority associated with various types of publications such as peer reviewed papers, empirical studies, and literature reviews.

-- see themselves as participants in “scholarship as conversation” in their own work and in their selection, analysis and critique of the information they discover during their research process. Students will gain an understanding of what they know and don’t know, and what impact their experiences and knowledge have on their research.

-- use more varied and complex approaches to research, understand the scope of research needed for a particular information need, and be able to assess information gaps or weaknesses and seek to fill them.

-- organize information in meaningful ways, synthesize and interpret ideas from multiple sources, and draw well-reasoned conclusions.

-- persist in the face of research challenges.