The Information Literacy and Library Instruction Program

The Information Literacy and Library Instruction Program at the Mervyn H. Sterne Library is designed to help UAB students master the wide range of print and electronic sources now available so that they can complete more thoughtful, interesting, and scholarly research assignments. The program is aimed at helping students develop the skills necessary for coping with increasing amounts of information and for becoming independent, life-long learners.

For any questions, please contact our Reference Librarian for Instruction and Outreach, Delores Carlito (dcarlito@uab.edu).

WHAT THE INFORMATION LITERACY INSTRUCTION PROGRAM OFFERS UAB FACULTY

Past library, or bibliographic, instruction has been aimed at the "physicalness" of the library, or the library as the keeper of books and journals. We now emphasize information literacy instruction rather than solely library instruction. With computers in libraries and the abundance of information available to students, finding information is no longer a problem — evaluating and locating good, reliable information is.

Information literacy encompasses more than good information-seeking behavior. It incorporates the abilities to recognize when information is needed and then to phrase questions designed to gather the needed information. It includes evaluating and then using information appropriately and ethically once it is retrieved from any media, including electronic, human, or printed sources. Information literacy is broader and more encompassing than library instruction and prepares students to be lifelong active learners who participate in their community.

Many students lack basic information literacy skills and believe that searching the Internet is as valuable as using a database. The reference librarians at Sterne Library are eager to work with you to provide enrichment for your students. In collaboration with UAB faculty, Sterne reference librarians can present sessions that are tailored to complement specific assignments, subject areas, or resources.

A Sampling of Information Literacy Instruction Classes

- **English 101**
This class provides a general orientation to Sterne Library and outlines the basics of the research process. It features an introduction to Sterne Library’s online information system, with an emphasis on using it to find books and articles. Instructors should try to schedule English 101 library orientations to coincide with assignments and papers requiring research and documentation. Librarians are available to help instructors develop other library-related assignments for English 101.

- **English 102**
  Library instruction for English 102 classes builds on the information covered in the English 101 library orientation. Topics include appropriate uses of scholarly journals, popular magazines, and newspapers, as well as locating and evaluating Internet sources. Instructors should schedule English 102 library sessions to coincide with specific class assignments requiring research and documentation. Librarians are available to collaborate with English 102 instructors in developing assignments.

- **University 101 and English 091 Interactive Tour**
  Students do the teaching in this tour. Five groups of students are given questions about different parts of the library. After spending twenty minutes answering the questions, the students conduct the tours to inform their classmates about the features of the library. This tour is a useful and fun introduction to Sterne Library.

- **History 300: Historian’s Craft**
  In this course, students are introduced to the various methods of historical research using primary and secondary sources. Utilizing both print and electronic resources, students are taught to use a wide variety of sources including bibliographies, databases, government documents, historical dictionaries, newspaper indexes, and oral histories. Students are encouraged to question the research, verify sources, and carefully evaluate materials.

In addition to these sessions conducted at the library or in your classroom, we have [WIT](http://www.mhsl.uab.edu/2009/infoliteracy/index.html), our Web-based Interactive Tutorial. **WIT** is an interactive tutorial that covers researching in the library from selecting a topic to completing a paper. A student can take the entire tutorial or only a section. **WIT** has a final quiz, and the results of the quiz can be e-mailed to a professor. **WIT** came about as a teaching aid for distance-learning classes at UAB; it is a way to introduce students to the library and finding information without them physically having to be here. It does not replace, but augments, in-person instruction.

**Suggestions for Effective Information Literacy Sessions**

To ensure that the instruction session for your class is successful, we offer these suggestions:

- Contact the Reference Department as far in advance as possible to schedule a session and to talk with a reference librarian about the class assignment.

- Give the students an assignment before they come to the library so their
research will be purpose-driven.

- Schedule the session close to the time when students will need to use Sterne Library.

- Give a copy of the class assignment in advance to the reference librarian who will be meeting with your class.

- Add your comments and questions during the library session. We require the instructor to be present in an attempt to make the session as interactive and problem-based as possible.

**To Schedule an Information Literacy Instruction Session or for More Information**

To have a librarian meet with your class, feel free to contact any of Sterne Library’s reference librarians. If you prefer, you can request an instruction session via an electronic form.

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**WHAT THE INFORMATION LITERACY INSTRUCTION PROGRAM OFFERS UAB STUDENTS**

Sterne Library’s Reference Department offers a variety of consultations designed to make you feel more comfortable using a university library and some of its basic resources, both print and electronic. These consultations are another step in your involvement with Sterne Library during your academic career.

**Research Paper Consultations, Citation Consultations, and WIT**

- **Research Paper Consultations**
  These one-hour, one-on-one consultations are aimed at your particular subject. They are by appointment only, and the whole hour will be spent on your topic.

- **Citation Consultations**
  These one-on-one consultations concentrate on your bibliography and in-text citations. You bring your paper and the works to be cited, and we will help you find your way through the maze that is APA, MLA, Chicago or Turabian. These are also by appointment only.

- **WIT**
  **WIT**, our Web-based Interactive Tutorial, is an interactive tutorial that covers researching in the library from selecting a topic to completing a paper. A student can take the whole tutorial or only a section. **WIT** has a final quiz, and the quiz results can be e-mailed to your professor.
WHAT THE INFORMATION LITERACY INSTRUCTION PROGRAM OFFERS
LOCAL SCHOOLS

Librarians at the Mervyn H. Sterne Library recognize their essential role in the development of responsible citizenship, local education, and culture. We encourage students to develop research skills before admission to college. Therefore, to promote information literacy, higher education, and the University of Alabama at Birmingham, we offer instruction to area schools. If you would like to set up a time to visit Sterne Library or would like a librarian to visit you, please review the information at Instruction to Area Schools.

STERNE LIBRARY INSTRUCTION FACILITIES

We prefer, when possible, to schedule library instruction in Sterne Library. Exposure to the library can help lessen student's library anxiety. We have several instruction rooms:

- **Rooms 163 and 164** are on the first floor of Sterne Library. They can each accommodate up to 40 students. They are equipped with Hitachi StarBoards, host computers, Smart Lecterns with AMX touch panel controls, DVD/VCRs, document cameras, and ceiling-mounted projectors. These rooms are also Wimba- and clicker-ready.

- **Room 242** is a small computer lab for hands-on, experiential learning. It has 10 networked student workstations and an instructor's networked computer with a CD drive and sound system. The room is also equipped with a ceiling-mounted projection system and a Smart Board interactive instruction delivery system.

Instruction also can be conducted in your classroom or a campus computer lab. If we come to your classroom, please make sure that the room has a computer with Internet access connected to a projector.

INFORMATION LITERACY COMPETENCY STANDARDS

From the *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* prepared and approved in January 2000 by the *Association of College and Research Libraries* (ACRL):

Information literacy is a set of abilities requiring individuals to:

- Recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information. Information literacy also is increasingly important in the contemporary environment of rapid technological change and proliferating information resources. Because of the escalating complexity of this environment, individuals are faced with diverse, abundant information choices--in their academic studies, in the workplace, and in their personal lives. Information is available through libraries, community resources, special interest organizations, media, and the Internet--and increasingly, information
comes to individuals in unfiltered formats, raising questions about its authenticity, validity, and reliability. The uncertain quality and expanding quantity of information pose large challenges for society. The sheer abundance of information will not in itself create a more informed citizenry without a complementary cluster of abilities necessary to use information effectively.

Information literacy forms the basis for lifelong learning. It is common to all disciplines, to all learning environments, and to all levels of education. It enables learners to master content and extend their investigations, become more self-directed, and assume greater control over their own learning.

An information literate individual is able to:

- **Determine the extent of information needed**
  The information literate student defines and articulates the need for information, identifies a variety of types and formats of potential sources for information, considers the costs and benefits of acquiring the needed information, and reevaluates the nature and extent of the information need.

- **Access the needed information effectively and efficiently**
  The information literate student selects the most appropriate investigative methods or information retrieval systems for accessing the needed information, constructs and implements effectively-designed search strategies, retrieves information online or in person using a variety of methods, refines the search strategy if necessary, and extracts, records, and manages the information and its sources.

- **Evaluate information and its sources critically**
  The information literate student summarizes the main ideas to be extracted from the information gathered; articulates and applies initial criteria for evaluating both the information and its sources; synthesizes main ideas to construct new concepts; compares new knowledge with prior knowledge to determine the value added, contradictions, or other unique characteristics of the information; determines whether the new knowledge has an impact on the individual's value system and takes steps to reconcile differences; validates understanding and interpretation of the information through discourse with other individuals, subject-area experts, and/or practitioners; and determines whether the initial query should be revised.

- **Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose**
  The information literate student applies new and prior information to the planning and creation of a particular product or performance, revises the development process for the product or performance, and communicates the product or performance effectively to others.

- **Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use...**
of information, and access and use information ethically and legally
The information literate student understands many of the ethical, legal and socio-economic issues surrounding information and information technology; follows laws, regulations, institutional policies, and etiquette related to the access and use of information resources; and acknowledges the use of information sources in communicating the product or performance.

INSTRUCTION LINKS

The following links are intended to keep both UAB faculty and librarians apprised of the latest trends, developments, and best practices in library instruction.

- **ACRL Instruction Section**
  The Instruction Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) seeks to enhance the ability of academic and research librarians involved in bibliographic instruction. The site has links to publications, professional meetings, and section projects.

- **ALA Library Instruction Roundtable**
  The American Library Association (ALA) Library Instruction Round Table advocates bibliographic instruction as a means for developing competent library and information use as a part of lifelong learning. Articles, news, information about upcoming round table meetings and workshops, sample forms, and online discussion groups are some of the links available at this site.

- **Institute for Information Literacy**
  The Institute for Information Literacy is part of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL). The Institute's Web site has useful links to best practices, sample assessments, and other library instruction resources.

- **LOEX Clearinghouse for Library Instruction**
  LOEX (Library Orientation Exchange) is a non-profit educational clearinghouse for materials used in library instruction, with links to conferences, online journals, syllabi, teaching sites, and library virtual tours and tutorials.

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