Peter J. Cayan Library, SUNY Polytechnic Institute

Information Literacy Plan for 2018-19

Information literacy skills and practices appear within the SUNY *Guidelines for the Approval of General Education Requirement Courses* principally in two places:

* I. KNOWLEDGE AND SKILL AREAS 10. BASIC COMMUNICATION. Students will, *inter alia*, “research a topic, develop an argument, and organize supporting details;” and
* II. COMPETENCIES 2. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT. Students will, *inter alia,* “understand and use basic research techniques;” and “locate, evaluate and synthesize information from a variety of sources.”

At Poly, we conceptualize our information literacy instruction as a three-tiered approach, with librarians providing basic instruction first in the First Year Seminar 101 (FYS 101) courses, second, introducing higher level concepts in the ENG 101 and basic communication and/or upper division writing courses, and, third, reinforcing discipline-specific resources and practices in 400-level, capstone, and thesis-level coursework in the major. Librarian-led instruction is offered in both face-to-face and digital modalities.

Basic information literacy instruction is a compulsory part of every FYS 101 class whether delivered by a librarian or by an instructor following a librarian-designed script. Assessment of student learning is baked into the recipe in the form of a homework assignment testing concepts taught (identify a scholarly article and describe the characteristics that make it scholarly, produce a citation for your article, and use one fact from your article in a sentence with an in text citation), and librarian written multiple choice questions on the course midterm exam.

Data produced by these assessments can be analyzed to assess baseline information literacy competency in incoming first semester, first year students.

The second tier of information literacy instruction, focusing on effective and ethical use of information sources, relies upon outreach to and collaboration with instructors of ENG 101 and basic communication and/or upper division writing courses (all required general education classes). Despite a high rate of librarian attrition and turn over at Poly, many of these relationships are thriving, with librarians having taught 14 classes in these areas in the fall semester, 2017, alone. Continued outreach to, and consistent assessment of, these instruction sessions and learning objectives will be areas of continuing effort in the coming years.

Finally, the third tier of information literacy instruction is seated in 400-level, capstone and undergraduate thesis-level coursework in the major. Here the emphasis is on discipline-specific information sources and citation systems, and the use of research techniques beyond keyword searching. Librarian support for these courses may take the form of group research instruction (5 classes taught in 400-level courses in fall 2017), or it may take the form of individual research appointments and handling complex reference queries.

Assessment of student learning in the third tier is on a course-by-course, ad hoc basis. An open book APA quiz, for example, is administered to students in every APA workshop taught to Psychology 405 students.

Poly academic departments vary in their approach to information literacy learning, with some, such as nursing, psychology, business and community & behavioral health, making extensive use of librarian-led instruction, while in other departments faculty take the lead.

Respectfully Submitted   
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