Information Literacy Instruction Plan
Transylvania University Library

Transylvania library’s mission is to educate information-literate, lifelong learners. Being sure that our students are information literate and that our college has this as its goal is the most important thing that the library does. A successful student, in the library’s estimation is one who is adept in seeking information and determining if the information is appropriate and trustworthy; at the lower levels the student knows what kind of information can be found in different sorts of resources and how to access those resources; at the upper level the student knows what resources are basic to their field specifically and how to use them. At any level, a successful student knows how to evaluate the information they find no matter what its format and how to use it appropriately for an intended purpose. This is based on the national Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education and that document’s definition of information literacy: 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. http://www.ala.org/ala/mgrps/divs/acrl/standards/informationliteracycompetency.cfm

As librarians,
we believe that information literacy is so fundamental that it is an integral part of the academic experience in and out of the classroom.
we believe course-integrated instruction connected with a real academic need is more effective than stand-alone information literacy courses or tours and library orientations.
we believe in a planned curriculum with distinct, sequenced information literacy content that allows practice and reinforcement without duplication.
we believe that our information literacy instruction and any subsequent activity must help to achieve a faculty member’s course objectives.
we believe that the library’s educational goals are interconnected with faculty course goals and curricular needs.
we emphasize the teaching of both concepts and skills as a means to achieve our information literacy mission of educating information-literate lifelong learners.
we educate individuals at the reference desk and in individualized consultations as well.
we strive to make each of these encounters an educational experience. In these settings we reinforce information literacy concepts from prior instruction and give students further opportunities for guided practice.

adapted from Wartburg College Information Literacy Across the Curriculum brochure

Instruction is offered to all classes with special effort extended to the First Year Seminar classes. It consists of librarians teaching students about resources and strategies that will help them with the research that they will conduct for that class. Librarians work to tailor instruction to the needs of the class, bringing attention to specific online databases, subject encyclopedias, and other resources appropriate for the individual class. First Year Seminar classes follow a scaffolded curriculum unique to the goals of FYS/FYSE/FYRS.
We would like them to know –

- **Appropriate types of resources for the information they seek.** When is it appropriate to use encyclopedias, news articles and sources, scholarly articles, the web? Do they need overview and background information (encyclopedias, news articles, web)? Do they need to understand the differing opinions in a scholarly debate (scholarly articles)? Are they seeking current, popular, marginal or alternative points of view (web, magazines, pamphlets, zines)?

- **Key resources for their field and how to use them.** For instance, MLA for the humanities, Medline and Agricola for biology, ERIC for education, PubMed for health and medicine, DSM IV and PsycInfo for psychology, etc.

- **Basic database structure.** Given the changeable nature of the information field and that most development is in databases of one form or another, it is necessary for students to have a basic understanding of database structure. The library catalog is a database; the major article indexes are databases; and the internet search engines operate within a basic database structure.

- **Basic library services and functions.** There are services that are common to all libraries. Students should know what they are and how the services help them. They include such things as interlibrary loan, reference, how collections are organized, reserves, special collections, etc. Knowing this will help them transition to grad school and further research.

- **Basic information about publishing in their field.** Where does the scholarly discussion and debate of their field take place (books, journals, blogs, discussion lists)? What is the difference between primary and secondary sources in their field? What is a review article? What is a peer reviewed journal? And which journal titles or other specific resources are key to their field?

- **How to evaluate the information they find.** Is it appropriate for what they seek? What is its authority? Is it reasonable? What is its purpose? Can the intellectual work of the author(s) be traced? Can information be substantiated? What do others say of the information?

Transylvania students should graduate being able to-

- Understand the differences between scholarly and popular sources.
- Access and use scholarly sources efficiently and effectively.
- Narrow a topic down to a manageable thesis.
- Create an annotated bibliography.
- Evaluate sources and choose those that meet a particular need or purpose.
- Cite sources responsibly because they understand why information needs to be cited.
- Explain why some information is free and some is not.
- Differentiate between types of information in terms of its quality and usefulness.
- Recognize when it is necessary to seek help from a professor, librarian, or other information professional.
Research Instruction Plan

First Year:

August Term Goals
Students should come away knowing:

1) there are a variety of research resources available, both online and in print, that can’t be accessed from the open web, and

2) there is a very helpful and knowledgeable library staff, available when needed in person and online, who will go the extra mile to help students find what they need to succeed as well as save them time and frustration.

August Term – Unpacking the Library
Students will complete an activity in which they learn about the library -- locations, services and collections, library staff -- through a story-telling format in which students complete learning tasks by first reflecting on their own experiences with libraries and then drawing comparisons between library representations in pop culture. Next, students completed a group activity in which they sorted library services/resources via a pre-determined set of questions using a deck of “library cards.” Our main objectives are that in coming first year students will gain 1) a sense of where materials and services are located, 2) a clear understanding that the library staff is friendly and approachable, and 3) familiarity with where help is available to them when needed. The activity also serves to break down the physical and psychological barriers that new students may feel when introduced to the college library.

FYS Library Workshop – How to use basic library resources – Reinforce basic knowledge & build relationship with librarians
Beginning in the fall 2015 semester as part of FYS and FYSE, first year students will be required to attend one library workshop. In previous years, FYS and Creative Engagements (CE) credits were treated as two separate programs. For Fall 2015, the library has combined FYS and CE instruction into one workshop that will be held during class time. The workshop is two-fold--it includes a common core that all sections will complete and then faculty have the option to choose a topic or theme in which to couch the overall workshop.

Common Core: By following the dissemination of information on a specific popular issue, students will gain experience differentiating between basic source types, identify stages of the information cycle, and follow the process of knowledge production from tweet to scholarly article. In addition, students will practice simple keyword searching for sources using the open web and library search tools.

Workshop Topics: Topics include plagiarism, effective search strategies, academic freedom, censorship, and patron privacy. The goal of the library workshops is to reinforce what students have learned in August Term while simultaneously preparing them for the types of research activities they will be engaged in during FYS and FYRS as well as throughout their studies at Transylvania and beyond. FYS focuses on critical reading. Toward the end of the semester, students are expected to begin finding and using a few scholarly sources. In order to support the
research of incoming first years for this and other courses, instruction covering basics such as search techniques in library databases and the online catalog have been embedded in the workshop activities.

**FYRS - How to explore a subject to decide on a topic; develop and use keywords; find articles, books and other resources on a specific topic; what is peer review**

FYRS focuses on a major research project. Librarians work with faculty to integrate knowledge of course specific resources into their classes. The session(s) with students reinforces what they heard in August Term in a situation that demands that they remember and use the information being presented. It offers an opportunity for exploration of the resources beyond the catalog and ASP at the point that it is needed by students.

Goals are:
1) Contextualize the search act within a larger research process and recognize that librarians are available to assist with any stage of the process.
2) Form effective search strings using keywords, Boolean operators, truncation, wildcards, and proximity searching.
3) Determine type, relevance, audience, timeliness, authority, and bias or objectivity of sources.
4) Break down a large research question or topic into several smaller, more focused questions or topics that together form an advanced research outline.
5) Demonstrate an understanding of quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, common knowledge, and fair representation of another’s work.

*Beyond the first year - for upper level courses:*

**Introduction to discipline specific resources**

Sessions for upper level courses build on first-year instruction. They focus on discipline specific resources, terms, and concepts and advanced use of the databases. For instance, budding chemists will be taught how to make best use of SciFinder, biology students will be taught to use bio specific databases, English majors may be taught to make use of MLA or Literary Resource Center, etc.

**Identifying and obtaining resources from other institutions**

We cover how to use ILLiad software. This ILL software is used at most institutions preparing our students not only for the research that they conduct at Transylvania but also the research they will conduct in graduate school. Students are also introduced to global tools such as WorldCat.

**How to evaluate resources; peer review**

It is important for students to know how to evaluate the resources they find, no matter what the format: paper or online, book or article or website. Students should be able to make a judgment based on the authority, the objective or purpose of a resource, the source’s reliability or accuracy, the timeliness as it relates to their topic, and the scope of the resource. Sometimes this is covered briefly in FYRS if time allows but it usually does not. This can be a session on its own.
## Research Instruction Plan Overview:

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| August Term    | Orientation  
Intro to the building and library services, people, and locations | Unpacking the Academic Library | FAMILIARIZE students with the physical layout of the library.  
ENCOURAGE sts to ask for help from library staff (reduce anxiety).  
ENSURE sts know what library services are available and how to access them. |
| FYS Library Workshop  
(combination of previous FYS and Creative Engagements program—new for Fall 2015) | Attend one workshop offered by the library as part of FYS. Topics include plagiarism, effective search strategies, academic freedom, censorship, and patron privacy.  
Orientation to online resources – catalog, e-books, general article database (ASP), etc.  
Introduction to sources of opinion and oppositional points of view to support the argumentative paper | Direct instruction  
Guided practice and modeling  
Brief online web tutorials | REINFORCE and EXPAND basic knowledge of information issues  
DEVELOP a habit of recognizing the need for and seeking of help when needed  
FAMILIARIZE students with the online resources available and how to access them. |
| FYRS          | Introduce databases appropriate for undergraduate research tailored specifically to support the topic of their FYRS class  
Highlight search strategies and techniques  
Discuss evaluating sources | Instruction  
Guided practice | -Contextualize the search act within a larger research process and recognize that librarians are available to assist with any stage of the process.  
-Form effective search strings using keywords, Boolean operators, truncation, wildcards, and proximity searching.  
-Determine type, relevance, audience, timeliness, authority, and bias or objectivity of sources.  
-Break down a large research question or topic into several smaller, more focused questions or topics that together form an advanced research outline.  
-Demonstrate an understanding of quoting, paraphrasing, summarizing, common knowledge, and fair representation of another’s work. |
| Upper level - Junior year and Senior Seminar classes | Familiarize with discipline specific resources  
Introduce more sophisticated search strategies/concepts  
Teach ILLiad and ILL processes | Instruction  
Guided practice | FAMILIARIZE students with the key resources in their field and how to use them.  
PROVIDE sts with basic information about publishing within their field. |