

CUNE Information Literacy and Writing Assessment Project: Tutorial for Developing and Evaluating Assignments

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Introduction

Welcome!

This guide is intended to assist faculty members in developing information literacy and writing assignments. The principles, methods, and materials used in this tutorial were developed for a series of information literacy and writing assessment (ILWA) faculty development workshops by Kim Kelley, UMUC Associate Provost, Information and Library Services, and Robert McDonald, former UMUC Director of the Effective Writing Program. Tom Krenzke, CUNE Reference and Instruction Librarian <http://www.cune.edu/librarystaff> made adaptations with permission in April 2010. Patrick Hargon, CUNE Director of the Academic Resource Center <http://www.cune.edu/ARC> made helpful comments and suggestions in December 2011.

Section 1: What Is the Writing and Information Literacy Assessment Project?

The purpose of the information literacy and writing assessment project is to provide training and resources to assist faculty in designing, implementing, and assessing student writing and research skills.

Use of ILWA assignments in courses

Faculty may use ILWA assignments to promote the cross-curricular objectives of information literacy and effective writing within a given discipline, or they may use such assignments to promote other disciplinary learning objectives.

In 1987, Arthur W. Chickering and Zelda F. Gamson wrote of the [Seven Principles for Good Practice in Undergraduate Education](#) (CUNE faculty-staff-student access) affirming the importance of active learning for students. We'd like you

to consider the suggestions and practices of the Seven Principles, and consider the most effective means of achieving them in your courses.

To promote active learning, the assessment tools provided here focus not only on the finished products of research and writing but comprise the whole process. The tools are also designed to be used not only by instructors but by students themselves as self-assessment tools. The assessment materials are offered, furthermore, as working tools in hopes that as they are modified and validated for use in various disciplines they prompt a general discussion of assessment practice.

Section 2: Background on Information Literacy, Writing, and Critical Thinking

Definitions of information literacy

In 1989, the American Library Association Presidential Committee on Information Literacy (January 10, 1989, Washington, D.C.) stated that, “Ultimately, information literate people are those who have learned how to learn. They know how to learn because they know how knowledge is organized, how to find information, and how to use information in such a way that others can learn from them. They are people prepared for lifelong learning, because they can always find the information needed for any task or decision at hand.”

“Information literacy does not so much describe something new as it does emphasize certain elements in our traditional concept of education. The necessity of evaluating information has always been with us; it is because of the changes associated with computer databases and the Internet that this seems an even more important goal now.” (Robin Angeley and Jeff Purdue, “Information literacy: an overview,” *Dialogue Series 6*. Western Washington U (2000). <http://www.wwu.edu/vpue/documents/issue6.pdf>)

“The concept of IL that has been adopted in this article is one that contextualizes it within the structures and modes of thought of particular disciplines. The approach to teaching IL that has been outlined here assumes that being information literate crucially involves being literate *about something*. Acquiring that literacy entails having first learned a set of generic skills that enable subject-specific knowledge acquisition. It follows from this integrated view that IL cannot be effectively taught as a value-added addition to the regular course-based curriculum, nor can it be restricted to the domain of the library, with some sporadic collaboration with classroom faculty. Rather, in a robust, holistic IL program, these skills are presented and developed as the curriculum of each course is taught. Librarians and classroom faculty share the responsibility for teaching them, so that each teaches the skills that their credentials and background best qualify them to teach. Librarians are responsible for imparting the enabling skills that are prerequisite to information seeking and knowledge acquisition across the curriculum, while classroom faculty have the responsibility of teaching those skills that are required for subject-specific inquiry and research.” (Ann Grafstein, “A discipline-based approach to information literacy,” *JAL* July/Aug 2002 vol 28(4) p197-204. CUNE faculty-staff-student access at <http://vproxy.cune.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=7172944&site=ehost-live> .)

“The fact that information literacy is applicable in all disciplines, involves metacognition, and is a way of thinking combined with a set of skills, hampers its inclusion in a methodical way in college curricula. It doesn’t “belong” to any single discipline, but instead belongs to all of them.” (Sharon A. Weiner, “Information literacy: a neglected core competency,” *EDUCAUSE Quarterly* 2010 vol 33(1). Access at <http://www.educause.edu/ero/article/information-literacy-neglected-core-competency> .)

Information literacy (IL) is one of the CUNE General Education curricular initiatives. Graduates are expected to develop “...a [lower level] general set of IL skills and understandings that will serve them in any learning environment...[and to develop an upper level] specific set of IL knowledge and skills in their major field that will equip them for entry-level professional work and/or graduate study....

....

Lower level IL

1. Using library databases
2. Differentiating between popular and scholarly sources of information
3. Properly citing sources

Upper level IL

Framing research questions

1. Conduct searches for scholarly and/or professional sources
2. Learn vocabulary unique to the field of study
3. Learn about research methods used in the field of study

Accessing and evaluating sources

1. Access essential resources for majors
2. Read, interpret and respond to scholarly and/or professional literature in the field

Understanding issues affecting use

1. Follow appropriate style manuals
2. Observe guidelines and standards endorsed by the discipline or profession”

(from CUNE Information Literacy Program available at <http://cune.libguides.com/infolitprogram> . For additional examples of information literacy learning outcomes, see <http://www.cune.edu/staffweb/tom.krenzke/InfoLitLearningOutcomes.pdf> , and see Information Literacy at UCLA: The Core Competencies at <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/8kh5v4q0> > Download PDF.)

To understand what IL is and how to incorporate IL assignments into the curriculum, we have developed this resource to make the process of designing, implementing and evaluating an IL/research assignment easier. We hope this document will provide you with ideas and a deeper understanding of the initiative and its benefit to you and your students.

Components of information literacy

What elements comprise IL? If we were to break down the different components of IL, they would be as follows:

- library literacy
- computer literacy
- critical thinking skills
- lifelong learning skills

What is information literacy?

- knowing you have an information need
- identifying and retrieving the needed information to address the topic – using different formats (e.g. Web or print resources) as necessary
- evaluating and critically examining the information
- organizing the information
- using the information effectively (analysis and synthesis)

Skills that comprise information literacy

- using library resources both within the library and through electronic means
- having sufficient computer competency to use both traditional and electronic tools efficiently and effectively
- determining the best resource to use, not simply using the resource that is most convenient
- developing an appreciation of the importance of information for workplace success and continuing to use information throughout life

Information literacy resources

Numerous resources provide additional information about IL and its applicability to higher education. Below are some important examples.

- “Information literacy: a neglected core competency” <http://www.educause.edu/ero/article/information-literacy-neglected-core-competency>
- ACRL (American Association of College & Research Libraries) Information Literacy <http://www.ala.org/acrl/issues/infolit>
- “Characteristics of programs of information literacy that illustrate best practices a guideline” <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/characteristics>
- Information Literacy in the Disciplines http://wikis.ala.org/acrl/index.php/Information_literacy_in_the_disciplines

- Developing Research & Communication Skills: Guidelines for Information Literacy in the Curriculum <http://www.msche.org/publications/Developing-Skills080111151714.pdf>
- “Faculty-librarian collaboration to achieve integration of information literacy” CUNE faculty-staff-student access <http://vproxy.cune.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=22603922&site=ehost-live>
- “Effective librarian and discipline faculty collaboration models for integrating information literacy into the fabric of an academic institution” CUNE faculty-staff-student access <http://vproxy.cune.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=32750177&site=ehost-live>
- “Making the case for information literacy” <http://campustechnology.com/articles/2006/07/making-the-case-for-information-literacy.aspx>
- Seeds of Change – Information Competence in Chicano & Latino Studies faculty tutorial <http://www.csulb.edu/~sluevano/chls/> . See also Deliverables at <http://www.csulb.edu/~sluevano/seeds/>

Writing as an element of ILWA assignments

Because it is neither a new nor a specialized term, *writing* does not need to be defined in the same way as *information literacy* does. But teachers who are considering adding ILWA assignments to their courses ought to consider the great variety of writing purposes that may entail research. James Kinneavy’s application of the “Communications Triangle” to the aims of discourse suggests some of the many possibilities. Sociology or history students may be assigned family histories (their own or other families’) that entail collecting actual interviews; developing surveys, researching registers of births, deeds, and wills; and consulting contemporary street maps, business directories, and newspapers. Communication arts, business, or marketing students may be asked to develop ad campaigns including reviews of market research, consumer psychology, demographics, and income trends. Information systems management students may be asked to measure the impact of government regulation on a particular communication medium by reviewing newspaper analyses; county, state and federal legislative records; and trade journal articles.

Students benefit from feedback at various stages of the writing process. The CUNE ARC Writing Center offers students a chance to discuss their work with someone outside of the class. Students may drop in during afternoon or evening hours or submit their work online – see <http://www.cune.edu/writingcenter> for hours and more information.

A sampler of writing assignment types

Writing assignments that might develop from research include:

mission statements and vision statements	formal arguments from principle
proposals	arguments generalizing from particulars
constitutions	news articles
legislative bills	magazine feature articles
definitions	reports
diagnoses	encyclopedia articles
white papers	historical fiction
marketing analyses	ballads
opinion surveys	plays, TV, or film scripts on course-related issues
feasibility studies	advertising campaigns
annotated bibliographies	political speeches
literature reviews	editorials
problem solutions	social, political, or artistic criticism

From: Kinneavy, James L. (1971). [A theory of discourse: the aims of discourse](#). p61. CUNE gen-col 808.042 K623 1980

Section 3: Promoting Effective Research and Writing in your Discipline

How to develop research/IL objectives for your course

To develop an assignment, the first step is to examine the goals and objectives of your program area majors and minors. See the Undergraduate Catalog <http://www.cune.edu/academics/undergraduate-studies/> and CUNE IL Program <http://cuneilprog.pbworks.com/> . The CUNE General Education curricular initiatives include research/IL, effective communication in writing, and sound critical thinking. See, for example, [Higher Learning Commission](#) > Peer Review [menu] > [Peer Review Resources](#) > Initial Accreditation [Comprehensive Visit for Initial Accreditation Team Report Template: Assurance Section](#) (2014) > Criterion Three: Teaching and Learning-Quality, Resources, and Support, pages

15 to 18. Once you are familiar with your program area's goals and objectives, you are ready to link those goals to your course goals and objectives. The steps for this task follow:

1. Review the goals and objectives of your program area.
2. Identify the research/IL, writing, and critical thinking goals and objectives within the larger objectives of your area.
3. Brainstorm ways to address the goals and objectives of the major or minor.
4. Identify goals and objectives for individual courses.
5. Identify research, writing, and critical thinking objectives within the larger objectives of individual courses.
6. Brainstorm ways to address and achieve goals and objectives for individual courses.
7. Identify opportunities for student research and writing within your course and major or minor.
8. Create ILWA assignments to meet the objectives of the individual courses.
9. Develop assignment criteria.
10. Formulate assignment guidelines.
11. Present assignment guidelines effectively.

Tool for analysis: ILWA syllabus review checklist

One way to determine if your syllabus meets the IL and writing objectives of your program area is to evaluate them using the ILWA Syllabus Review Checklist.

Course and section _____
 Faculty member _____

Standard: The syllabus clearly describes the ILWA project students must complete and how the project is related to the content and objectives of the course. The ILWA project assignment is written out and includes its purpose(s), a sketch of its context and possible audiences, the timing of its various parts or stages, and the assessment criteria by which it will be graded. Students are forewarned about their ethical responsibility to cite sources responsibly; they are informed of the expectation that their use of source materials reflects their own sound critical judgment.

+ / - Comments:

_____ Course guide: Contains contact information for library staff <http://www.cune.edu/librarystaff> and the CUNE Writing Center <http://www.cune.edu/writingcenter>, encouraging students to seek support beyond the classroom.

_____ Course description/Goal(s): States that students will be asked to complete projects involving research and writing in the context of and to the standards of the discipline and the course level.

_____ Objectives: Objectives specify research and writing skills to be developed during the course using task-oriented language.

_____ Schedule information: Describes steps or stages in the research and writing assignments and states when it (they) are due.

_____ Grading information: Defines criteria for assessing research skills and writing effectiveness.

_____ Academic honesty: Accurately reflects the CUNE academic integrity policy.

Number of researched and written assignments: _____ 1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____ 4 _____ 5
 _____ 6 or more.

Section 4: Designing Assignments that Contain Writing and Research

Guide for effective ILWA assignment design

One way you may assist students is by expressing expectations in unambiguous terms. Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives can help find these terms. Another way Bloom's taxonomy can be useful is in its classification of mental tasks ranging from simple recall of information to sophisticated construction of knowledge. Ask yourself the following questions about the language, the expectations, the organization, and the rationale of your assignments.

Questions for syllabus review:

1. Do the assignments include any or all of the following terms from Bloom's taxonomy? (The intellectual tasks charted below increase in sophistication moving from left to right.)

Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation
List	Summarize	Solve	Analyze	Design	Evaluate
Name	Explain	Illustrate	Organize	Hypothesize	Choose
Identify	Interpret	Calculate	Deduce	Support	Estimate
Show	Describe	Use	Contrast	Schematize	Judge
Define	Compare	Interpret	Compare	Write	Defend
Recognize	Paraphrase	Relate	Distinguish	Report	Criticize
Recall	Differentiate	Manipulate	Discuss	Justify	
State	Demonstrate	Apply	Plan		
Visualize	Classify	Modify	Devise		

2. Does your syllabus have a goal and objective that addresses information literacy and effective writing?
3. Have you outlined the assignment objectives and criteria in the syllabus?
4. Have you tied the assignment to the goals and objectives of the course and major?
5. Have you raised awareness of the resources available to students, such as the library staff <http://www.cune.edu/librarystaff> and the Writing Center <http://www.cune.edu/writingcenter> ?

Effective information literacy assignments

When you begin the process of designing an IL assignment, it is worthwhile to review the criteria that help ensure your assignment will be effective.

Do:

- communicate specific learning objectives (Bloom's taxonomy)
- try the assignment yourself
- take advantage of library and Internet instruction resources
- take advantage of the Writing Center <http://www.cune.edu/writingcenter> support and collaboration
- stress tasks/resources as well as the topic
- teach research strategies rather than simply making an assignment
- collaborate with the librarians – “assignment alert”
- design assignments to minimize cyber-cheating. See “[Designing assignments to minimize cyber-cheating](http://vproxy.cune.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=15449023&site=ehost-live)” <http://vproxy.cune.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=15449023&site=ehost-live>

Don't create frustration:

- “Mob Scene” – sending the entire class to look for the same information, book, or article. Use a variety of resources, give students different assignments
- “Shot in the Dark” – inadvertently giving incomplete or incorrect information
- “Scavenger Hunt” – sending students to search for obscure bits of information
- “Old Curiosity Shop” – assigning use of outdated reference sources
- “Elusive Topic” – assuming students will be able to select a manageable topic without faculty assistance
- “Lost in Space” – sending students off to use Internet resources without demonstrating how to approach the assignment and providing some hands-on time to try the assignment when the faculty member is available for consultation

Characteristics of effective library assignments

Library-related assignments should originate from and be directly related to the course subject matter. If we want students to learn how to effectively choose among, evaluate, and use information sources, they must have a concrete purpose for applying the research and measuring its value. Research projects should arise from course work and the

results should be examined, discussed, and incorporated into the course. A library research project should never be added to a class merely to teach library resource use. Research without a purpose surely serves no educational goal.

The students must understand the purpose of the project and how it will benefit them. All too often students think that research projects are assigned so that they might demonstrate their proficiency at paraphrasing sources. Faculty do not improve the situation when they approve topics and lists of resources that the students freely admit are familiar to them. Rather, they should demonstrate that the true value of library research is to learn something new or see an issue from a new perspective.

As an example of a research model, see William Badke's "A model for the process of informational research" at http://www.twu.ca/library/Flash_Tutorials/informational_research/index.html or see his "Research strategies – taking charge" at <https://acts.twu.ca/Library/chapter1.htm>. The CUNE library holds his book [Research strategies: finding your way through the information fog](#) REF 025.524 B142 2011.

Analysis should be emphasized over answers. Many poorly executed research papers result from a student's belief that he or she must come up with a solution to a problem through the project. This would certainly be an unfair expectation; many scholars spend a career trying to come up with an answer. Learning to analyze, question, and delve into the scholarly debate surrounding an issue, rather than presenting an easy, immediate answer, are the key skills students should learn through their research.

Students should be encouraged to plan their research before and as they retrieve information. One difference between novice and expert researchers is the amount of time spent in planning and analyzing an issue. Student researchers should be taught that background reading, outlining relevant perspectives, and investigating the amount and type of information available are necessary parts of effective information use. If they plunge directly into the first information sources they find rather than following a plan, serendipity is likely to direct their projects rather than any true information need.

The assignment should be a progressive project, with time and opportunities for concrete feedback from a variety of sources. Students should see that building our personal or societal base of knowledge is a progressive, often collaborative, process. Regular feedback from their instructors, fellow students, outside experts, and others should help them to see questions, requests for more information, and criticisms in a positive light.

Once you are ready to design an assignment, you can examine how others have developed assignments to assist you in developing your own ideas for assignments relevant to your class. Following are a number of different assignments in use. In addition, see page 14 of this document for links to Web sites that offer more examples using a variety of information technologies. And, be aware that library and Writing Center staff are available to give you feedback on the assignments you've designed, or to offer collaboration on assignments; see <http://www.cune.edu/librarystaff> and <http://www.cune.edu/writingcenter> for more information.

Examples of information literacy assignments

IL assignments progress through several different levels of difficulty. The most basic level is appreciation and the most challenging is integrated skill. For each level, assignment examples are provided to help faculty to develop assignments of their own.

Appreciation

1. Have students explain what an information database is and how it is relevant for finding information.
2. Have students discuss the differences among various Web search engines.
3. Have students examine the role of information in a democratic society. What are the issues? How is information relevant or important to them?
4. Have students explain the difference between a popular and scholarly work.
5. Have students explain how information is stored and retrieved, (e.g. print, microform, optical, floppy, CD-ROM, magnetic tape).
6. Have students go to the library either on the CUNE campus or in their local community and report back on the kinds of services that are available.
7. Have students share information on how to obtain interlibrary loan books or articles through the CUNE library or through their local community library.

8. Have students interview an information professional about how computers have changed the way people access information.

Literacy

1. Given a topic, have students search for relevant information resources using the Web and compare what they retrieve with the resources found in library databases.
2. Have students complete the research for a term paper except for the paper itself. Have students turn in at intervals: choice of a topic, annotated bibliography, outline, thesis statement, first paragraph, and conclusion.
3. Have students identify 10 articles from library databases and obtain at least three full text articles, providing a full bibliographic citation.
4. Have students compare using a resource in paper and then in electronic format. Students should discuss the pros and cons of using the resource in different formats. How were they similar? How did they differ?
5. Have students retrieve statistical resources of relevance to their course. Have them look for statistical trends and postulate the causes of those trends in writing. Discuss in class the most likely causes of the trends.
6. Have students construct a timeline or map that illustrates the influence of a particular piece of published research and then summarize the relationship of the original research with what followed.

Facility

1. Stage a debate in class with pro and con panels. Students should be responsible for obtaining relevant information, including both electronic and paper resources.
2. Write an evaluation of a particular work or person using book reviews, weighing biographical information about the author and the reviewers. Students should identify at least one electronic resource available on the topic.
3. Compare a fictional work with social commentary or accounts written about people during the same time that the fictional work takes place. Cite the resources used, ensuring that the citations are accurate.
4. Have students examine a Web search using a search engine (such as Google) and a database (such as Academic Search Premier or LexisNexis Academic) for information resources on a topic. Have students prepare a description of the resources available through the two tools and discuss how the tools are similar and different.
5. Have students prepare an annotated bibliography including the best, most useful books, essays, periodical articles, or other relevant sources on a subject. Entries should be properly cited and annotated. Students should be prepared to explain how each work was useful to them: basic information, useful insights (if so, what?). Also, students should explain how and where they obtained the information.
6. Have students prepare a term paper using appropriate resources in a variety of formats.

Integrated skill

1. Have students develop a logical plan to retrieve information in a variety of formats, retrieve the information, evaluate the information, cite the information resources appropriately, and present their findings to the class.
2. Have students use a bibliographic file management program to download citations and personal files of references and then develop a bibliography using their package. One example of a free bibliographic file management program is Zotero <http://www.zotero.org/>. See <http://research.library.gsu.edu/zotero> for a tutorial.

Information literacy assignments in use

A stand-alone assignment

Review a newspaper or business magazine for accounts of or editorials about ethical issues that have arisen in business or the professions. List four titles and match those with units in the course syllabus. Provide a brief abstract of each article. What conclusions can you draw from this article?

Example

Article: Richard Morin, "Women as winners, losers and movers." Washington Post, (Sunday, January 23, 1994), Unconventional Wisdom, Section C5.

Course syllabus unit: Unit 7. Issues especially affecting working women, and sexual issues in business ethics.

Abstract: Although 6 out of 10 Americans interviewed in a Gallup Poll said society favors men over women and women do not have equal job opportunities, women continue to make real progress moving up the corporate ladder. More young

women than young men have moved out of their parents' home. Men rebound financially from divorce significantly more quickly than women.

An assignment integrated into a project

Students are asked to write papers on an activity in which an individual knowingly breaks a societal, religious, or institutional law. A list of possible actions such as shoplifting, copyright abuse, plagiarism, pre-marital sex, speeding, employee theft as examples would be helpful to get students started on the assignment. As a first step, students conduct a literature search for information on prevalence, arguments for and against, and consequences of the action they have chosen to study. With this preparation, students plan and carry out a piece of original research – a survey, interview, observation, etc. The results must be included in their final paper. Make it clear to students that although their research is not strictly scientific, their findings do have a valuable place in their papers. In a brainstorming activity, students are encouraged to consider their topics from different perspectives by writing in-class profiles titled “I am a _____,” in which they pretend they are the law-breaker, the law-enforcer, the victim, and so on.

(Adapted from Anne C. Coon, “[Using ethical questions to develop autonomy in student researchers.](#)” *College Composition and Communication* 40, February 1989, 85-92.)

Letters to the editor

Each student chooses a topic of current national interest and writes a letter expressing his/her opinion on the subject to the editor of a local newspaper.

Students work in small groups to critically examine one another's letters and to identify any dubious statements. Each student is assigned to substantiate those statements that were singled out by the group as needing more convincing evidence or authority. Research is required for the process, and the result is a 750-word essay, with documentation in the form of notes and a bibliography.

Information literacy and writing: evaluating assignments

The following assignments are actual assignments in use. Examine the assignments and decide which ones you think have a writing assignment, IL assignment, or both and which ones do not. If the assignment does not include a writing or IL component, try to modify it so that it would include one. If the assignment contains writing or IL, alter it so it would include both.

As you review the assignments, decide whether they require students to:

1. identify
2. retrieve
3. evaluate
4. effectively utilize information

Sample assignments

1. Using the course readings, consider the concept of race. Debate both sides of the issue of whether the concept of race should be abolished. Explain why some scientists believe the concept is useless and why others believe it is useful. Evaluate the issues and support your position.
 - *Sample 1 Correct Answer:* “Yes, it's an example of an assignment that integrates the skills of information literacy and writing.” **Information Literacy and Writing:** That's right! This is an example of a writing and IL assignment. It asks students to conduct research and write a paper supporting their point of view on the topic of the assignment. It also asks students to debate the issue and examine multiple points of view thereby fostering critical thinking skills. One improvement that could be made to this assignment is to be more specific – the topic is very broad. Students would benefit from references to at least one article to help them narrow their search.
 - *Sample 1 Incorrect Answer:* “No, it is not an example of a writing and information literacy assignment.” This assignment has several elements of IL and writing. It asks students to identify points of view, retrieve information, evaluate the information and then use the information to complete a paper as part of the assignment. As a result, it meets the criteria. It is very broad and could use more specificity, but it is an example of an assignment that incorporates IL and writing principles.

2. When President Clinton campaigned, he promised to allow gays in the military. The backlash was great and a compromised solution of “don't ask, don't tell” was accepted. Investigate the possibility of homosexuality as an innate (genetic) factor. Would this politically change its acceptability or unacceptability? Provide a brief literature review of sources regarding the genetic transmission of homosexuality. Discuss your personal view in the body of the 10-page, double-spaced paper. The paper should have at least five references, none of which can be from the required readings from this course.
- *Sample 2 Correct Answer: “Yes, it’s an example of an assignment that integrates the skills of information literacy and writing.”* **Information Literacy:** This is an assignment that specifically states the requirements of the assignment and tells students to go beyond the course materials to obtain original source material. The assignment has elements of an IL assignment in that students must identify, retrieve, evaluate, and use the information they obtain. **Writing:** In this case, the professor asks students to prepare a 10-page paper giving the student’s personal view. This might result in less than scholarly work. The faculty member could improve the assignment by specifying how the five references would relate to the student’s personal view. Also, the faculty member could provide a guide for the student to ensure the student covers the salient points and keeps on the topic. Also, it might be useful for the faculty member to review the students’ resources before they write the paper to be sure students are on the right track.
 - *Sample 2 Incorrect Answer: “No, it is not an example of a writing and information literacy assignment.”* Actually this is a typical example of an IL and writing assignment. For IL, the professor includes all of the elements: identification, retrieval, evaluation, and use of materials. In addition, the assignment asks students to examine differing points of view, and then provide their own point of view thereby fostering critical thinking skills. The assignment is not specific enough, however, and students would benefit if the professor specified how the five references should be incorporated into the student paper and provided guidelines for the paper to ensure students cover the salient points.
3. Choose one of the following topics: fairness in hiring and promotions, race-based affirmative action, employee rights and duties, quality of work life, the mommy track or the daddy track, or business and childcare. Write a 2,000- to 2,500-word paper on this topic, emphasizing the ethical issues involved. Imagine how adherents of differing ethical theories might handle the problems. Decide how you think these issues should be resolved and defend your answer against the objections that are likely to be raised against your view.
- *Sample 3 Incorrect Answer: “Yes, it’s an example of an assignment that integrates the skills of information literacy and writing.”* **Writing:** This is definitely a writing assignment. The assignment specifies that a paper is required and provides a suggested length. On a positive note, the assignment does encourage sensitivity to point of view and grounds for support of a personal commitment. The faculty member does not specify who the “adherents of differing ethical theories” are and therefore, gives the impression that rigor is not expected. The faculty member could improve the assignment by specifying which ethicists students should refer to so that students will be clear on the purpose of the assignment and the resulting level of work would likely be improved. **Information Literacy:** This assignment is not illustrative of IL. Students are asked to provide their points of view, but the faculty member does not ask students to do research or provide alternative points of view. Therefore, a research component is missing entirely. If the faculty member asked students to provide support for their point of view then the assignment would be illustrative of IL.
 - *Sample 3 Correct Answer: “No, it is not an example of a writing and information literacy assignment.”* **Writing:** This is definitely a writing assignment. The assignment specifies that a paper is required and provides a suggested length. On a positive note, the assignment does encourage sensitivity to point of view and grounds for support of a personal commitment. The faculty member does not specify who the “adherents of differing ethical theories” are and therefore, gives the impression that rigor is not expected. The faculty member could improve the assignment by specifying which ethicists students should refer to so that students will be clear on the purpose of the assignment and the resulting level of work would likely be improved. **Information Literacy:** This assignment is not illustrative of IL. Students are asked to provide their points of view, but the faculty member does not ask students to do

research or provide alternative points of view. Therefore, a research component is missing entirely. If the faculty member asked students to provide support for their point of view then the assignment would be illustrative of IL.

4. Define humor. Compare and contrast the definitions of each of the theorists we have covered in the course.

- *Sample 4 Incorrect Answer: “Yes, it’s an example of an assignment that integrates the writing and information literacy.”* **Writing:** This assignment is a paper, although that is not explicitly stated. Therefore, it is a writing assignment. However, the assignment lacks specificity because it does not tell students the length of the paper. Also, the requirement that students cover every theorist in the course makes it likely that students will only be able to provide a short section on each theorist which doesn’t foster as much critical thinking. The assignment could be improved if the writing requirements were spelled out and students were asked to write about a few theorists in depth. It would also help if the instructor specified which theorists he/she thought were important to give students guidance before they begin the writing process. **Information Literacy:** This is not an assignment that asks students to explore resources beyond the course materials. Therefore, it does not include a research component and does not fulfill the IL requirement. If the professor asked students to provide contrasting points of view of humor obtained from the literature or asked students to learn more about humor theorists using materials obtained in the library or using Web resources, it would then be considered to be an IL assignment also.
- *Sample 4 Correct Answer: “No, it is not an example of a writing and information literacy assignment.”* **Writing:** This assignment is a paper, although that is not explicitly stated. Therefore, it is a writing assignment. However, the assignment lacks specificity because it does not tell students the length of the paper. Also, the requirement that students cover every theorist in the course makes it likely that students will only be able to provide a short section on each theorist, which doesn’t foster as much critical thinking. The assignment could be improved if the writing requirements were spelled out and students were asked to write about a few theorists in depth. It would also help if the instructor specified which theorists he/she thought were important to give students guidance before they begin the writing process. **Information Literacy:** This is not an assignment that asks students to explore resources beyond the course materials. Therefore, it does not include a research component and does not fulfill the IL requirement. If the professor asked students to provide contrasting points of view of humor obtained from the literature or asked students to learn more about humor theorists using materials obtained in the library or using Web resources, it would then be considered to be an IL assignment also.

5. Identify various types of stress related to the workplace. Examine possible sources of stress from three varied types of careers (for example, white, blue, pink collar; accountant, salesperson, assembly-line worker) and ways both the individual and the organization can work to ameliorate job stress. Discuss different ways to measure the effects of job stress, including the strengths and weaknesses of each. Explore the impact of identified stress on the individual and the organization.

- *Sample 5 Incorrect Answer: “Yes, it’s an example of an assignment that integrates the skills of information literacy and writing.”* This assignment is not illustrative of both writing and information literacy and therefore, is incomplete. Information literacy is missing entirely. **Writing:** This assignment is definitely a writing assignment. It provides students guidance about the nature of the assignment and identifies the types of stress the instructor wants the students to examine. The assignment could be improved if the faculty member provided more information about the assignment itself. For example, by providing guidance as to the number of pages, what students should discuss first, and provide examples of possible topics. **Information Literacy:** This assignment makes no mention of research. It is entirely unclear whether the faculty member is requiring students to do research or not. It may be that the faculty member shares this information face-to-face with students in his/her class. However, it is always helpful to put this type of information in the assignment itself. If the faculty member specified that the students should do research and how they should proceed, it would then be classified as an IL assignment.
- *Sample 5 Correct Answer: “No, it is not an example of a writing and information literacy assignment.”* This assignment is not illustrative of both writing and information literacy and therefore, is incomplete.

Writing: This assignment is definitely a writing assignment. It provides students guidance about the nature of the assignment and identifies the types of stress the instructor wants the students to examine. The assignment could be improved if the faculty member provided more information about the assignment itself. For example, by providing guidance as to the number of pages, what students should discuss first, and provide examples of possible topics. **Information Literacy:** This assignment makes no mention of research. It is entirely unclear whether the faculty member is requiring students to do research or not. It may be that the faculty member shares this information face-to-face with students in class. However, it is always helpful to put this type of information in the assignment itself. If the faculty member specified that the students should do research and how they should proceed, it would then be classified as an IL assignment.

6. Choose a developmental psychologist mentioned in our text. You will examine the development of your target psychologist's ideas and research program. Indicate which sources in your bibliography will contribute to your final paper. Provide justification for each selection. You should also assess the reactions of other psychologists to the work of your target person.
 - *Sample 6 Incorrect Answer: "Yes, it's an example of an assignment that integrates the skills of information literacy and writing."* **Writing:** This assignment does not define the written assignment, only the research portion of the assignment. To be representative of writing, the assignment needs to have more information about the goals of the writing assignment, the elements of the writing assignment, and the number of pages students should complete. **Information Literacy:** The instructor indicates that she/he expects students to compare and contrast the views of various psychologists. In doing so, she encourages students to use critical thinking skills and directs students to do research as part of the assignment. It is definitely an IL assignment.
 - *Sample 6 Correct Answer: "No, it is not an example of a writing and information literacy assignment."* **Writing:** This assignment does not define the written assignment, only the research portion of the assignment. To be representative of writing, the assignment needs to have more information about the goals of the writing assignment, the elements of the writing assignment, and the number of pages students should complete. **Information Literacy:** The instructor indicates that she/he expects students to compare and contrast the views of various psychologists. In doing so, she encourages students to use critical thinking skills and directs students to do research as part of the assignment. It is definitely an IL assignment.

7. This assignment is designed to acquaint you with the services available at almost any library and to help you become aware of the publication sources, specifically the journals, available to you in the field of management in the public sector. For any one of the journals that you include in the report, identify its review policy. A reference librarian can help you determine this. There are differences in review policies among journals ranging from editor's choice to rigorous blind review processes.
 - *Sample 7 Incorrect Answer: "Yes, it's an example of an assignment that integrates the skills of information literacy and writing."* **Writing:** This assignment does not include any writing. It is entirely unclear how the students will relay to the faculty member what they learned as a result of the assignment. **Information Literacy:** This is the type of assignment librarians dread. The review policy of journals is usually not in the journal. As a result, students are sent on a circuitous route, usually resulting in frustration, trying to find the review policy for a journal. Also, there is no indication how this assignment relates to the content of the course. An IL assignment should be related to a project or paper. This assignment's purpose is unclear; it may be the instructor thought he/she would teach students about the difference between scholarly and trade journals. There are other, more effective ways to develop an assignment that fulfills this purpose and would be more helpful to the students.
 - *Sample 7 Correct Answer: "No, it is not an example of a writing and information literacy assignment."* **Writing:** This assignment does not include any writing. It is entirely unclear how the students will relay to the faculty member what they learned as a result of the assignment. **Information Literacy:** This is the type of assignment librarians dread. The review policy of journals is usually not in the journal. As a result, students are sent on a circuitous route, usually resulting in frustration, trying to find the review

policy for a journal. Also, there is no indication how this assignment relates to the content of the course. An IL assignment should be related to a project or paper. This assignment's purpose is unclear; it may be the instructor thought he/she would teach students about the difference between scholarly and trade journals. There are other, more effective ways to develop an assignment that fulfills this purpose and would be more helpful to the students.

8. Review a newspaper or business magazine for accounts of or editorials about ethical issues that have arisen in business or the professions. List four titles and match those with units in the course syllabus. Provide a brief abstract of each article. What conclusions can you draw from these articles?
 - *Sample 8 Incorrect Answer: "Yes, it's an example of an assignment that integrates the skills of information literacy and writing."* **Writing:** The assignment includes writing. However, it would be greatly improved if it also specified what types of issues the faculty member considers important to give students a sense of the issues relevant to the course. **Information Literacy:** IL is included in this assignment because students are examining newspaper and business magazines. It is likely that the students will go beyond the class materials in order to complete the assignment and fulfill a basic element of an IL assignment. It is not clear, however, how this assignment is tied to the content of the course or what the instructor's purpose is in making the assignment. The assignment would be improved by making it much more specific and providing students with guidance by suggesting ethical issues of relevance in today's world of work.
 - *Sample 8 Correct Answer: "No, it is not an example of a writing and information literacy assignment."* **Writing:** The assignment includes writing. However, it would be greatly improved if it also specified what types of issues the faculty member considers important to give students a sense of the issues relevant to the course. **Information Literacy:** IL is included in this assignment because students are examining newspaper and business magazines. It is likely that the students will go beyond the class materials in order to complete the assignment and fulfill a basic element of an IL assignment. It is not clear, however, how this assignment is tied to the content of the course or what the instructor's purpose is in making the assignment. The assignment would be improved by making it much more specific and providing students with guidance by suggesting ethical issues of relevance in today's world of work.
9. Each student in the course will identify a topic of current national interest, and write a letter to the editor of a local newspaper expressing his/her opinion on the subject.

Students will work in small groups to critically examine one another's letters and to identify any dubious statements.

Each student is assigned to substantiate those statements which were singled out by his or her group as needing more convincing evidence or authority. Research should be conducted that will result in a 750-word essay, with documentation in the form of notes and a bibliography.

- *Sample 9 Correct Answer: "Yes, it's an example of an assignment that integrates the skills of information literacy and writing."* **Writing:** This assignment specifies the parameters of the writing assignment and therefore, is definitely an example of a writing assignment. The faculty member could improve the assignment by suggesting what types of evidence are acceptable for supporting a student's position. Without it, the TV news could be the only basis upon which students defend their opinion. In order to be properly substantiated, the student's work would need to go beyond just the TV news. As currently written, that may or may not occur. **Information Literacy:** This assignment is a good IL assignment. It requires students to go beyond the class materials, it encourages students to do research, and it is tied to the content of the course.
- *Sample 9 Incorrect Answer: "No, it is not an example of an example of a writing and information literacy assignment."* **Writing:** This assignment specifies the parameters of the writing assignment and therefore, is definitely an example of a writing assignment. The faculty member could improve the assignment by suggesting what types of evidence are acceptable for supporting a student's position. Without it, the TV news could be the only basis upon which students defend their opinion. In order to be properly substantiated, the student's work would need to go beyond just the TV news. As currently

written, that may or may not occur. **Information Literacy:** This assignment is a good IL assignment. It requires students to go beyond the class materials, it encourages students to do research, and it is tied to the content of the course.

10. Put yourself in the shoes of a soldier who fought in World War II. Your grandchild is learning about the war in school and wants your firsthand recollections of what it was like, including the most remarkable moments, who was in charge, what the leadership of your commanding officer meant to you, and why you agreed to fight.
- *Sample 10 Incorrect Answer:* “Yes, it’s an example of an assignment that integrates the skills of information literacy and writing.” **Writing:** This assignment is a writing assignment but the parameters of the assignment are entirely unclear. Is the paper an essay? How long should it be? These questions need to be answered in the assignment itself. **Information Literacy:** There is absolutely no need to conduct research to complete this assignment. As a result, it does not meet the criteria for an IL assignment.
 - *Sample 10 Correct Answer:* “No, it is not an example of a writing and information literacy assignment.” **Writing:** This assignment is a writing assignment but the parameters of the assignment are entirely unclear. Is the paper an essay? How long should it be? These questions need to be answered in the assignment itself. **Information Literacy:** There is absolutely no need to conduct research to complete this assignment. As a result, it does not meet the criteria for an IL assignment

Additional examples of assignments available on the Web

There are a number of Web sites that offer excellent examples of how faculty across the country are integrating the use of the Web, and resources on the Web, into their courses. The sites below provide numerous examples, usually listed by discipline, that you may wish to use to get ideas of how to integrate the use of Web-based resources into your course.

- Instruction Clearinghouse Initiative <http://www.lib.vt.edu/instruct/clearinghouse/index.html>
- USF Library Instruction Assessment Clearinghouse <http://guides.lib.usf.edu/content.php?pid=84214&sid=625567>
- Information Literacy at NJCU Rubrics <http://www.njcu.edu/Guarini/Instructions/Rubrics.htm>
- ICT Literacy in the CSU <http://teachingcommons.cdl.edu/ictliteracy/index.html>
- MERLOT <http://www.merlot.org/merlot/index.htm>
- EDUCAUSE <http://www.educause.edu/>
- U of Washington Center for Teaching & Learning <http://www.washington.edu/teaching/>
- National Science Digital Library <https://nsdl.oercommons.org/>
- Library Instruction Round Table <http://www.ala.org/lirt/front>
- Seeds of Change – Information Competence in Chicano & Latino Studies faculty tutorial <http://www.csulb.edu/~sluevano/chls/>. See also Deliverables at <http://www.csulb.edu/~sluevano/seeds/>
- Virtual Training Suite <http://www.vtstutorials.co.uk/> (formerly <http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/>)
- Assignment design resources at <http://cune.libguides.com/infolitprogram/appendices>

The information literacy checklist

The IL checklist provides proposed standards faculty can use to create an assessment tool of their own for their individual research assignment. You may use all or some of the following standards when evaluating student research.

In evaluating student research, it is helpful to have a standard tool that allows the faculty member to compare students to the standard to determine their level of success in completing the research project. Below are some suggested standards faculty can use to evaluate student research-based assignments.

Suggested standards for evaluating student research

- The student used resources beyond book and journal materials (e.g. Web resources, technical reports, personal interviews) if appropriate.
- The research question chosen for the paper was succinct and clear.
- The materials referenced in the body of the paper were accurately cited.
- The topic chosen was sufficiently narrow to allow the student to research it thoroughly.

- The bibliography demonstrated that the student had chosen those resources most pertinent to the research question rather than listing everything available on the topic.
- The bibliography included a variety of resources (e.g. scholarly journals, popular journals, newspaper sources, other).
- The materials used in the bibliography were both historical and current (if relevant) and presented in a standard style format. They included a sufficient number of primary sources (when appropriate) and included a sufficient number of secondary sources.
- The student's paper demonstrated that the student:
 - could distinguish between fact and fiction.
 - could differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information.
 - identified the author's purpose and point of view accurately.
 - identified unsubstantiated statements.
 - identified inconsistencies, errors, and omissions.
 - identified bias, stereotyping, or incorrect assumptions.
 - could compare and contrast different points of view properly.
 - included his/her original ideas.
- The student understood and used consistently a uniform system of documentation (citation format).

Selected Readings

“Developing information literacy skills early in an undergraduate curriculum.” Edward Freeman, Eileen Lynd-Balta. *College Teaching*, Summer2010, Vol. 58(3), p109-115 Several core competencies related to information literacy have been identified by the Association of College and Research Libraries. Students must learn to gather relevant information and communicate their findings effectively. The collaborative activity described here, which could easily be adapted for other disciplines, introduces first-semester freshmen to the standards of professional scientific writing, the different forms of publication, search strategies to effectively find information using a relevant database, and plagiarism. Analysis of our pre- and post-activity assessment demonstrates that students gain both confidence and knowledge on several important skills as a result of this activity. Providing content-relevant information literacy experience lays the foundation for students to be successful consumers of information. CUNE faculty-staff-student access at <http://vproxy.cune.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=51422946&site=ehost-live>

“A discipline-based approach to information literacy.” Ann Grafstein. *The Journal of Academic Librarianship*, July2002, Vol. 28(4), p197-204. This article argues that the responsibility for teaching information literacy (IL) should be shared throughout an academic institution, rather than limited to the library. Historical context of librarians and IL; Description of the college library; Goals and objectives of teaching IL. CUNE faculty-staff-student access at <http://vproxy.cune.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=7172944&site=ehost-live>

“Encouraging critical thinking in student library research.” Mardi Mahaffy. *College Teaching*, Fall2006, Vol. 54(4), p324-327. Professors are often displeased with the research and synthesis of thought demonstrated in many of their students' research papers. One way to address this problem is by rewording assignments to encourage critical thinking. By reworking traditional research assignments to reflect the five information-literacy skills developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries, instructors can guide students through the research process in ways that actively develop critical thought processes. CUNE faculty-staff-student access at <http://vproxy.cune.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=23337669&site=ehost-live>

“Information literacy rubrics within the disciplines.” Britt A. Fagerheim, Flora G. Shrode. *Communications in Information Literacy*, 2009, Vol. 3(2), p158-170. This paper reports the results of a pilot project in which the authors developed rubrics for assessing information literacy in the disciplines and examined whether rubrics are a feasible and effective method for librarians to assess their students' information literacy skills. We developed rubrics for capstone classes in chemistry and psychology based on benchmarks appropriate for each major. We then used the rubrics to assess the research and information literacy skills the students displayed in their papers or projects. Access at [http://www.comminfolit.org/index.php?journal=cil&page=article&op=view&path\[\]=Vol3-2009AR8](http://www.comminfolit.org/index.php?journal=cil&page=article&op=view&path[]=Vol3-2009AR8) > PDF

“What happens to your research assignment at the library?” Dennis Isbell. *College Teaching*, Winter2008, Vol. 56(1), p3-6. At the reference desk, librarians engage in an often predictable sequence of instruction with students that centers on assisting students with focusing their topics before they can move to the information collection stage. It is an area of instruction that is often taken for granted and that most faculty are unaware of, but it is critical for successful student research papers. The author summarizes some of the strategies librarians use to assist students in focusing their topics and some suggestions for teaching faculty on how to build topic focus strategies into their research assignments. CUNE faculty-staff-student access at <http://vproxy.cune.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=aph&AN=31161337&site=ehost-live>