



## **Chapter IX**

# **Evolution of a Collaborative Undergraduate Information Literacy Education Program**

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## **Abstract**

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*This chapter examines the evolution of information literacy as a distinct concept incorporating critical thinking, and research and communication skills. It describes Duquesne University's efforts to develop its current information literacy program during a period of rapid technological change and evolving accreditation standards, and briefly addresses the Association of College and Research Libraries' (ACRL) information literacy research agenda. Duquesne's librarians and disciplinary faculty have collaborated to introduce information literacy into the curriculum. All freshmen and transfer students receive instruction geared toward establishing baseline competency in computer and information literacy skills. Collaboration among faculty, librarians, and campus computing staff has resulted in improved instruction and adoption of course management software to facilitate management of over a thousand students per semester, as well as sharing of course texts and assignments among instructors in the Schools of Business, Education, and Music, the College of Liberal Arts, and the library.*

## Introduction

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As libraries adopt technology for delivering information, library users are increasingly confronted with the need to use technology effectively to attain their research goals. Today's student researcher requires multiple skill sets that include both technological and evaluative components. The proliferation of technology in higher education for research and teaching highlights the need for training in basic computer skills. From the librarian's perspective, students' training needs also include skills in information retrieval, evaluating resources, the ethical use of both computers and information, and synthesis and manipulation of information to create new knowledge.

Together these skills comprise information literacy. According to ACRL (2000):

*“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*
- *Access the needed information effectively and efficiently*
- *Evaluate information and its sources critically*
- *Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base*
- *Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose*
- *Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally.”*

ACRL (2000) also distinguishes between information literacy and information technology skills. Information technology skills are those that enable an individual to use computers, software applications, databases, and other technologies to achieve a wide variety of academic, work-related, and personal goals. Information literacy has broader implications for the individual, the educational system, and society.

## Background

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Library literature of the 1960s through the 1980s used terms such as library orientation, library instruction, user education, and bibliographic instruction (BI) to describe the activities and programs librarians developed to teach research methods and orient users

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