

“Where we are with information literacy*”

*In-for-ma-tion Lit-er-a-cy *n.* 1. 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." 2. [longer definition](#)... from Association of College & Research Libraries¹

LIS has an [Information Literacy website](#) (go/infolit) to provide the relevant information and resources to support the College's information literacy efforts, which are an integral part of meeting the NEASC reaccreditation standards. More detailed explanations of how information literacy is defined, our vision for the program, and links to standards, articles, and resources for faculty can be found on this website.

Information Literacy Introductory Skills

In the past the research and technology skills we expected our students to learn were not specifically spelled out. A group of LIS librarians and technologists developed a set of introductory research and technology skills that were adapted and simplified from a much longer set of information literacy competency standards developed by the Association of College & Research Libraries (ACRL) that are in wide use at colleges and universities. The full ACRL version includes introductory to advanced skills, while our version focuses only on the introductory skills students should be expected to learn during their initial year in order to operate in Middlebury's information environment. We felt that the intermediate and advanced skills varied too much by discipline and should therefore be developed within the majors. Our introductory skills were developed with input from the Faculty LIS Advisory Committee, Student LIS Advisory Committee and LIS liaisons (librarians, technologists). Our introductory skills and the complete ACRL standards can be found on the information literacy website [here](#) (go/infolitskills).

Information Literacy Intermediate and Advanced Skills

It is our long-term goal to develop discipline-specific intermediate and advanced information literacy skills tied to department/program learning goals. We should be thinking in 5-year increments and beyond, along the lines of the reaccreditation review with its 5-year check-in. We are currently doing pilot projects with two departments (HARC and Chemistry) to develop a list of learning goals and classes to target to serve as models. A draft of the HARC pilot has been completed and is awaiting full department approval before it will be shared with other departments. Chemistry has identified their skills and target classes but the draft document has not been completed. The question remains how we should approach getting more departments to participate in the pilots and how to communicate our information literacy efforts to faculty. A small working group within LIS has been meeting to discuss this and suggestions have been offered by the Faculty LIS Advisory Committee. The College Academic Affairs Committee endorsed expanding the pilots. Our next focus is to bring the issue to the Department Heads and Educational Affairs Committee meetings. Ultimately our goal is to develop sufficient pilots to serve as examples to help develop such learning goals for all departments and programs.

Information Literacy in FYSE's

There has been a long history of collaboration between faculty, librarians, technologists, and the Center for Teaching, Learning, & Research (CTLR) to include assignments and/or

instruction in First Year Seminars to help our students begin to learn information literacy skills. Our introductory skills document will help us to better focus on the skills that our students need to learn. However, assignments and instruction vary with each First Year Seminar (FYSE) and not all faculty/classes participate. Currently the first year seminar program is being revamped and the role of research is uncertain. In any case we will have to supplement class instruction with other methods such as a FYSE research guide, tutorials, and also focus on other introductory level courses.

Tutorials

By adding online video tutorials, we are increasing the options we make available to faculty, librarians, and technologists to support the teaching of introductory information literacy skills. LIS has developed a number of short library web tutorials and have more in the works. See our tutorials page at [go/tutorials](#). To support technology learning, LIS now provides access to Lynda.com technology video tutorials. See [go/lynda](#). In addition, LIS has developed, and will continue to develop, detailed documentation for Middlebury-specific technologies via the [LIS wiki](#) or other tools as appropriate.

Baseline assessment of the information literacy skills of all incoming first year students

It is not enough to simply define skills we want our students to have and attempt to teach them. We also need to assess skill levels students arrive with and learn over their academic career. LIS, with the help of Institutional Research, used the **Research Practices Survey (RPS)**, administered by HEDS (Higher Education Data Sharing Consortium) to get a baseline assessment of incoming students skills in fall 2011. “The Research Practices Survey is a fifteen-minute questionnaire, developed by and for liberal arts institutions, that assesses undergraduate students’ experiences, dispositions, and proficiencies in conducting college-level academic research.” It is based on the ACRL information literacy standards. For more information, see the description and options [here](#). A one page summary of the results was shared with faculty before fall semester. A scaled down and modified version of the survey was administered by the college in the fall 2012 and sent to all students as part of a longer required survey, thus greatly improving participation. A one page summary was shared with faculty. For fall 2013 we will target a small number of FYSE’s from across the disciplines and administer our scaled back version of the assessment before and after instruction. In the future we intend to assess student skills at other times between their first year seminar and graduation. We will also be interested in the results of an alumni survey by the College on how well Middlebury has prepared them for their futures. There are questions dealing with information literacy that will be relevant for us.

Last updated 8-19-2013