THE INTEGRATION OF INFORMATION LITERACY SKILLS INTO THE CURRICULUM

ILS skills are not “optional” materials ignored by students.
The Skills Modules are evaluated in three different ways.

Information Literacy Skills Modules

The Survey
A survey was designed to collect data about students’ perceptions concerning the use of the information literacy skills that they assist students on:

Information Literacy Skills

Methodology

Potential Sources of Error

Preliminary Results: Tendencies

ILS modules are not “optional” materials ignored by students. The Skills Modules are evaluated in three different ways.

What did you like about the most the Skills Modules?

While the students who have come later to the degree program, so they have been ill-trained, I have already learned what the skills modules teach, having written dozens of essays and having received much criticism from my tutors, so they did little for me other than offer review of what I already knew. The overall students strongly agree that the modules were beneficial in improving their skills in understanding Chicago style (4.33), documenting their sources (4.2), and completing their assignments successfully (3.8), as well as reporting evidence and avoiding plagiarism (3.66).

What did you like about the most the Skills Modules?

The modules were generally informative, but none of them were in-depth enough for my needs. I mainly wrote my research papers by applying my professor’s feedback, but even then that was difficult to deal with. The Chicago Style citation could be flushed out a great deal if there were more writing skills for the course. I have translated the book, how to cite a quote from an author who is quoting someone else, and so forth.

To understand them thoroughly, too much time was required, and I found the course quite too full of material already to finish it reasonably within six months.

I admit that at least I was surprised that such basic information was included in a senior level course! However, I still found that I learned from the skills modules and in the end I found them to be valuable.

Improve the specificity or tailor each skill module to the content of the course. The question banks in Moodle would expand exponentially but the benefit to the student would be worth it. For instance, the modules could be different based on the field of study, where students are interested in. Some courses could have daily feedback from the university library, it may be useful to provide practical instruction in the regard if, for example the skills modules are part of a Roman History course, it may help to have skills testing in research, particularly in the type of course at the university that is offered.

Based on the materials available on the fall of the Roman empire ranges from National Geographic articles to the highest levels of scholarly research. Narrowing search parameters becomes vital, yet uncovering the proper information is a difficult challenge.

For me the skills modules were a good refresher for how to write a proper research paper. Also it was good to learn how to use the online library and research available. This was not possible when I was in School.

They were simple, but effective.

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The Problem

For a long time, professors and tutors have been warning about students’ performance in writing research papers. They also think that a lot of novice and junior students are not fully aware of the rigorous principles of academic integrity. As in other humanities and social sciences courses, many students in history type courses have reported that they enroll in their courses, they have not sufficiently mastered the IL skills they need to complete research assignments satisfactorily. Some are unfamiliar with the study of history at a university level, and others have not had the time for research and writing. It is a significant indication that there is not only limits students’ performance and learning but also results in academic misconduct, such as cheating and plagiarism. Instructors have tried various preventive and remedial measures hoping to rescue students from their frustrations—and their tutors. However, none of these measures have provided a satisfactory solution.

The Solution Adopted — The integration of IL skills into the curriculum of history courses

Information literacy (IL) skills modules were integrated into the curriculum of history courses with the aim of producing research assignments satisfactorily, improving their performance, and avoiding academic misconduct and plagiarism. Keeping in mind past unsuccessful practices, a multidisciplinary group (a librarian, an editor, and a learning designer, the course coordinator) got together with the course coordinator to assess the context, discuss previous experiences, and identify a better and more effective solution. Instruction was designed, the skills modules were documented, and learning materials were developed. After that, the skills modules were integrated into the course guide, and their impact was evaluated. The IL skills modules were designed to help the work students to have produce, the criteria they have to meet, and the expectations they have to satisfy to complete their assignments. Since experience has shown students tend to tend to avoid the modules of instruction (style guides, etc.), the IL skills modules were designed to create assignments so that students could not ignore them. Automated quizzes were designed to reward students’ knowledge acquired in the skills modules without creating extra work for tutors. The skills modules are made explicit and become part of the course’s criteria in terms of assignments, evaluation criteria, and rubrics for the assignment. Sequential small assignments throughout the course reflect the research process. last but not least, the skills modules are reflected in directions and instructions for final exams, which include essay questions.

Theoretical Framework

The Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education (ACRL, 2000) framework was adopted to design the information literacy skills instruction. It became clear that a new approach to enhance students’ performance needed the information literacy skills instruction should be designed to address both the current information literacy skills offered by the ACRL principles where “an information literate is able to:”

• Determine the extent of information needed.
• Access the needed information using a range of information sources, effectively, and efficiently.
• Evaluate information and its sources critically.
• Select, sort, and prioritize 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 resources, and access and use information ethically and legally.”

References:


