

**Information Literacy for At-Risk Students
Goals for Information Literacy Fellows Program 2006**

Draft statement of purpose:

Students often enter college viewing themselves as students doing required assignments in required courses, rather than as individual learners ready to enter a conversation. Students are working for the teacher and waiting for real life. This might be especially true of at-risk or struggling students, who have a tendency to seek omniscient authorities, see knowledge as certain and simple, and believe that learning should be fast and easy. Our goal, as librarians and teachers, is to help prepare students to enter more fully into the academic conversation, as learners and curious inquirers.

Program Goals:

1. Create model curricula/syllabi for PSYC 1730 courses that integrate information literacy as a vital foundation of academic success.
2. Create lesson plans, teaching materials, and strategies that support the integration of information literacy into PSYC 1730 and other freshman experience courses/opportunities.

Learning Goals for PSYC 1730:

1. Students will have a robust mental model of the research process, the information world, and the production of knowledge. They will see that research is a conversation, in which they are active participants. They will learn that there is often no “right answer.”
2. Students will develop strategies of metacognition, so that they can think more critically about what works for them in terms of information seeking, critical thinking (including integrating and synthesizing information), and managing and applying information to college assignments and their lives.
3. Students will know when and how to get help from librarians, instructors and peers, including learning how to ask good questions.

Issues that need to be addressed:

Attitudes/motivation:

- How do we get students to become more intrinsically motivated?
- How can we provide ruptures and dissonance to promote learning in a safe and supported way? How can we make it fun?
- How can we “fascinate” our students?
- Information literacy takes time and persistence, but our students often take the quickest and easiest path.
- Students need to learn that they won’t master these skills immediately.
- Students need to know that they can do this, even if it is hard. Students get discouraged early.
- Students often fear libraries and librarians. They have library anxiety.

Beliefs about knowledge:

- At-risk students often believe that knowledge is certain and seek knowledge from authorities.
- At-risk students often believe that knowledge is simple (bits and pieces).

Strategies:

- Students often don't seek help when they need it, and they don't know how to get help and ask effective questions. They need to be prepared for getting a lot of questions in response before getting immediately to answers.
- Students often ask friends and parents for help or for the information itself.
- Students often rely on textbooks and materials from their own homes rather than seeking information more widely.
- Students don't enter the library early enough.
- Students often stop at the first, quickest, or easiest answer that they find. This is especially true in the Web environment, where they can easily find information that is loosely related to their topics, but doesn't necessarily address their information needs.

Skills:

- Students have Google skills, but don't necessarily know what is possible or available otherwise.
- Students need critical thinking skills so that they don't accept whatever is fastest, easiest, or matches what they already know. Students need to understand that not all information has equal value.
- Students need to be able to read for understanding.
- Students need to be able to transfer skills, habits, attitudes, to other classes and settings.

Barriers:

- Time: it takes a lot of time to teach and learn information literacy skills. It is hard for both teachers and students to chip away at something as large as information literacy.
- Hovering parents.