

MITE Monthly Tip
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Enhancing Curricula with Information Literacy Frameworks

Information literacy is defined as, “the set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning.”¹

Introduction

These days, information consumption and scholarly publishing are both fast-paced and show no signs of slowing. Educators are called upon to guide learners in the process of information creation, locating best evidence and knowledge dissemination in all fields but what guidance and supports exists? The *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* was created by the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Task Force to provide a resource to enhance and support curricula while engaging learners. As described by the ACRL:

“The *Framework* opens the way for librarians, faculty, and other institutional partners to redesign instruction sessions, assignments, courses, and even curricula; to connect information literacy with student success initiatives; to collaborate on pedagogical research and involve students themselves in that research; and to create wider conversations about student learning, the scholarship of teaching and learning, and the assessment of learning on local campuses and beyond.”¹

At the core of the *Framework* are six “frames” that guide learners and educators to a deeper understanding of information literacy through relevant examples. Each frame is accompanied by knowledge practices and dispositions to identify the learner’s comprehension of information literate abilities. The six frames include:

- Authority Is Constructed and Contextual
- Information Creation as a Process
- Information Has Value
- Research as Inquiry
- Scholarship as Conversation
- Searching as Strategic Exploration

Supporting Curricula with the Frames

Educational milestones in the health disciplines are directly aligned with the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education’s* frames. In the article, *Identifying Information Literacy Skills and Behaviors in the Curricular Competencies of Health Professions*, the authors correlated information literacy skills with several health science program proficiencies.² For instance, evaluating evidence is a foundational competency across many specialties. In graduate medical education, the demonstration of “locating and applying the best available evidence, integrated with patient preference, to the care of

complex patients” marks a competency in evidence-based and informed practice.³ In the same vein, information literacy’s *Authority Is Constructed and Contextual* frame calls on the learner to evaluate evidence and “ask relevant questions about origins, context, and suitability for the current information need.”⁴ Similarly in nursing, requirements to “use information and communication technology to gather data, create information, and generate knowledge” are a foundation of education.⁵ Supporting this same idea, the *Scholarship as Conversation* frame encourages learners developing this ability to engage in the scholarly conversation and to attribute any previous relevant work.⁴

Key Takeaways

Be on the lookout for opportunities to use the *Framework* in your teaching to support your learners on their path to information literacy fluency. Use the knowledge practices and dispositions to evaluate your student’s level of understanding or engage them in discussion. Frames can also be used for instruction or assignments. Most importantly, the frames can offer an opportunity for collaboration. Reach out to MaineHealth’s Library and Knowledge Services for supporting in using the *Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* to enhance curricula.

References

1. Association of College and Research Libraries. Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. Accessed November, 2022. <https://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework#introduction>
2. Waltz MJ, Moberly HK, Carrigan EE. Identifying information literacy skills and behaviors in the curricular competencies of health professions. *J Med Libr Assoc.* Jul 1 2020;108(3):463-479. doi:10.5195/jmla.2020.833
3. Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME). Emergency Medicine Milestones. 2021. Accessed November 2022. <https://prep.acgme.org/globalassets/pdfs/milestones/emergencymedicinemilestones.pdf>
4. American Library Association. Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. Accessed November, 2022. <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework>
5. American Association of Colleges of Nursing. The essentials: core competencies for professional nursing education. 2021. <https://www.aacnnursing.org/Portals/42/AcademicNursing/pdf/Essentials-2021.pdf>

Further Reading

[Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education](#)