Finding and incorporating information – strategies and challenges

Part 1

Describe your process for finding information / information discovery.

Part 2

Describe students’ process for finding information / information discovery.
Information Literacy

- The ability to assess the information need = NEEDS
- The ability to locate (efficiently) information = FINDS
- The ability to evaluate information = EVALUATES
- The ability to synthesize and use the information = USES
- The ability to use information ethically = IS ETHICAL

What we know

- Technological literacy does not equal information literacy
- Students struggle with navigating vast amounts of information
- Students are not prepared to evaluate information
- Students don’t know how to start research or when to stop looking
- Students are not engaging with information
- Our students mimic our behavior
Traditional Research Paper Pieces

- **Written research plan**: Have students take time to prepare for the project, addressing such questions as
  - What question am I asking? What information do I need to answer this question? (NEEDS)
  - What is my research strategy? Where will I look for information? (FINDS)
  - How will I select/judge resources? (EVALUATES)

- **Library session**: Schedule a class session with a librarian (classadmin@lib.nmsu.edu). Librarians will create a specialized assignment guide for your students and introduce them to valuable resources and searching techniques.

- **Research log**: Have students log their searching experiences, keeping track of databases, publications, scholars, search terms, etc.

- **Bibliography**: Have students turn in working, annotated bibliographies well ahead of time. If you use EndNote Web, encourage your students to do the same and then share folders.

- **Directed reflection paper**: When students submit their papers, have them reflect on the overall process, the obstacles they encountered, the resources they found most useful, what they would do differently next time.

Assignment Supplements and Stand-ins

- **Annotated bibliography** (or annotate an existing bibliography): Students find a variety of resources, summarize content, and evaluate content according to pre-defined criteria.

- **Timeline of events**: Students create a timeline identifying related events that led up to and followed a particular event. This type of assignment can also be used as a method to trace the impact of a core publication.

- **Profiles**: Students explore a pre-defined set of information about multiple people, places, etc. This assignment works for products, characters, novels, procedures, etc. It serves as a good aide to a compare/contrast writing assignment.

- **Identifying scholars/issues**: Students identify prominent scholars, issues, or publications related to a particular field.

- **Exploring indexes/databases**: Students explore the literature available on a particular topic in two different indexes. They then present an evaluation of each index. Simultaneously, they can be collecting literature for a bibliography.

- **Challenge an article**: Students read an editorial or opinion piece, list the claims, and support of refute each of them using credible information. In addition, they can explore the background/agenda of the author.

- **Literature comparison**: Students explore a single topic as it is presented over time, across publication type, or between disciplines.

- **Best of bibliographies**: Students take a complex topic and prepare a “best of” bibliography for a particular audience.

- **Close reading**: Students read an excerpt of a research study, novel, critical analysis, or another prominent type of literature in the field. They identify vocabulary, terms, or concepts that are unclear or source-specific and define them in the context of the literature.
What Can Librarians Do?

- Assist in library assignment development.
- Develop assignment specific library guides.
- Provide library orientation sessions(s) for the class.
- Provide library research instruction throughout the course.
- Provide students one-on-one assistance at the reference desk.
- Provide in-depth research consultations by appointment.

- Schedule a session in the library: [http://nmsu.libguides.com/libraryinstruction](http://nmsu.libguides.com/libraryinstruction)
- Library liaisons to departments: [http://nmsu.libguides.com/subjectspecialists](http://nmsu.libguides.com/subjectspecialists)

Questions to ask yourself

- What is the purpose of the research portion of the assignment?
- Can it be broken down into individual, progressive pieces?
- Are the requirements clear and reasonable?
- Is the terminology well-defined?
- Is there course time set aside for discussion, questions, and an instruction session in the library?
- Will this assignment require students to peruse a variety of information sources?
- Does this assignment encourage the ethical use of information?
- Are your students prepared?
- Have you tried the assignment?

Web Pages Listing Sample Assignments

[http://www.library.illinois.edu/ugl/instructors/assignmentsamples.html](http://www.library.illinois.edu/ugl/instructors/assignmentsamples.html)
[http://www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/library-instruction/creating-effective-assignments](http://www.wsulibs.wsu.edu/library-instruction/creating-effective-assignments)
Research Paper Assignment

For this assignment, you will be writing a scholarly essay. This essay may be either informative or persuasive—depending on your findings. For the most part, you will be identifying a gap or question that you’ve noticed in the field and either defining the gap or answering the question.

Purpose: See above

Audience: Varies based on topic

Length: As long as it takes—usually about 8-12 pages

Resources: You must support your point/investigation with secondary research—typically in the form of a review of literature. Use whichever citation format best supports your area of study.

Criteria for the Research Paper

• Offers solid evidence to support the writer’s claim (statistics, facts, quotations, surveys).

• Includes evidence of primary research.

• Includes references to at least one book and three scholarly articles.

• Offers a review of literature that thoroughly discusses the current view of the subject being investigated.

• Maintains a clear focus toward the established audience throughout the paper.

• Organizes the material presented in a coherent, logical manner.

• You are not required to submit drafts of the Research Paper, but I am more than willing to give feedback to your draft. If you decide to submit a draft, be sure to include a cover letter.

• Because this is a 200-level course, we will not discuss the “basics” of writing an essay. If essay-writing is something you are concerned about, you may always visit the Writing Center for feedback.

• The omission of running spell check and proofreading from your essay will adversely affect your grade.
Bibliography


