

Tutorial Information Literacy Curriculum

Draft 2/09/09

Purpose of tutorial information literacy sessions

To help students learn the critical information skills and concepts, including critical reflection on the methods, norms, and significance of inquiry, necessary for their first year at Grinnell College.

Objectives for tutorial information literacy sessions

Objective 1: Students will form a research question

(Tutors will be encouraged to help students complete these tasks before a tutorial library session; librarians can create a tutorial resource webpage to facilitate the completion of learning activities).

Sample learning activities:

- Students work with tutor and classmates to identify a promising topic
- Students explore general information sources in order to increase familiarity with research topic (*Encyclopedia Britannica* and *Wikipedia*, e.g.)
- Students consider if topic has a manageable focus in the context of the assignment
- Students list key concepts and terms
- Students draft a research question

Objective 2: Students will identify terms and tools

(Objectives 2-4 can be introduced during a tutorial library session)

Sample learning activities:

- Students select keywords and synonyms
- Students select an appropriate point of entry into information resources (e.g., a disciplinary database, a reference work, Google Scholar)
- Students evaluate and select appropriate resources for research on their topic

Objective 3: Students will access useful sources

Sample learning activities:

- Students construct, use, and revise search strategies using Boolean operators, subject headings/controlled vocabulary and database limiters in a manageable number of relevant online tools (Grinnell College Libraries catalog and a database, e.g.)
- Students consider the scope and focus of their research question in light of search results
- Students browse and retrieve promising sources available in the Libraries and online. This may include a physical orientation to the library.

Objective 4: Students will evaluate sources

Sample learning activities:

- Students compare sources, for instance, in terms of authority, timeliness, point of view, audience (popular vs. scholarly, peer reviewed materials), and “overlooked” criteria (length, language, e.g.)
- Students consider and articulate their own criteria for evaluating sources in the context of the assignment

Objective 5: Students will use research findings

(To be done after a tutorial library session)

Sample learning activities:

- Students organize and apply the best sources to their research question
- Students cite their research findings appropriately
- Students share their research in an appropriate and effective manner
- Students reflect on their research process, including choice of topic, and consider how to improve
- Students compare their knowledge on the topic before and after research