

Information Evaluation and Research Practices

Learning Goal: Through the core curriculum, students will gain an understanding of the standards by which information is evaluated in society. Students will learn to judge the authenticity, validity, reliability, and originality of the sources of information they use. They will be able to do the research necessary to weigh evidence objectively in traditional and electronic formats.

Learning Outcomes: With increasing proficiency, students will

1. Develop search strategies and use library catalogs and databases to find relevant material; and
2. Critically evaluate sources; and
3. Integrate and cite evidence appropriately. In addition, students will
4. Understand the concept of intellectual property and practice academic honesty.

Rationale (i.e., the intention of the proposed outcomes): The first outcome concerns the search for information, which must require both reflective intentionality and facility with the actual resources. The second outcome concerns the student's ability to judge the quality of the information that is discovered in the search, identifying its biases and possible alternatives. The third outcome concerns the writing process itself, focusing especially on an argument that grows out of the integration of the evidence (discovered and evaluated) and that is supported by that evidence, properly cited. The fourth outcome concerns knowledge and practice of ethical standards in the use of information, an expectation that would presumably be integrated with the Honor Code. The habits of mind of the first three outcomes are established by sustained practice and develop as student's progress through the curriculum.