

What does “Tech Savvy” really mean?

“Tech Savvy” students can email, text, Twitter, download multimedia and hang out in Facebook, but...

“Tech Savvy” students still struggle with evaluating content, finding quality information, synthesizing concepts and developing their own ideas.

Library Research in context

Library Research in Context (LRC) is an activity-based course aimed primarily at sophomore and junior students, though all students are welcome.

This is a flexible course that can be adapted to complement almost any class, program or discipline. The fundamental goal of the course is to help students build and develop critical thinking and research skills for academic life and beyond.

Subject-specialist librarians use in-class activities, assignments, and discussion to present the course material.

“I wish I had known about this class when I was a freshman!”

LRC student comment from course evaluation

Assessing student skills

Results from a pre-test of Library Research in Context students showed that:

- 49% seldom or never use the library catalog
- 75% could not identify a characteristic of a peer-reviewed article
- 57% could not identify the title of a book in a citation for a chapter of that book
- 42% could not say what could be found in the library catalog

Skills and Concepts Addressed in Library Research in Context

Basic Skills

How to read citations

How to find books and articles

How to evaluate information

Differences between online library resources and free Web resources

Advanced Skills

How to formulate a research question

How to create and modify a search strategy

How to determine the scope of a particular database

Differences between primary and secondary texts

Bigger Concepts

The non-linear nature of the research process

The value of the scholarly peer-review process

The nature of scholarly communication

The social and ethical contexts of information

The Result is confidence

At the completion of the LRC course, students felt more confident in their researching skills. They understood how to evaluate information they found online and were able to develop their own ideas based on that information.

Student scores on the LRC post-test went up on most questions by at least 40%.

Students reported feeling less “library

anxiety” and more confident in navigating what had previously seemed like an information

“I never knew how to use maybe 60% of the resources available at the library. I think this course would be valuable to everyone.”

LRC student comment from course evaluation

“I learned how to use different databases and find quality information, whereas before I was really just ‘Googling’ everything.”

LRC student comment from course evaluation



quagmire.

Students learn to integrate information skills and concepts to accomplish course goals, and also to become better life-long learners. They also build and develop critical thinking skills.

Information literacy should not be considered a given. Contrary to the conventional wisdom, the information literacy skills of new students are not improving as the post-1993 Internet boomlet enters college. At the same time, in a sea of user-created content, collaborative work and instant access to information of varying quality, the skills of critical thinking, research and evaluation are increasingly required to make sense of the world.

From the 2007 Horizon Report
New Media Consortium
www.nmc.org/horizon/2007/report

Life-long Learning and information literacy

It has become increasingly clear that students are in need of skills to filter through the vast amount of information in their lives.

Information literate students are equipped with the skills they need to become thoughtful and efficient users of information. These skills also help students become independent, life-long learners by enabling them to analyze and evaluate the information they find.

"Very, very useful! I wasn't way over my head like I feel in some classes, but I still learned a LOT!"

LRC student comment
from course evaluation

LRC is a one-semester hour credit class. For current offerings, check ISIS (<http://isis.uiowa.edu>) or the Instructional Services page (www.lib.uiowa.edu/instruction).

For more information, contact Kathy Magarrell at 335-5093 or kathy-magarrell@uiowa.edu.

University of Iowa Libraries
Reference & Library Instruction
100 Main Library • Iowa City, IA 52242
www.lib.uiowa.edu/instruction

The University of Iowa prohibits discrimination in employment, educational programs, and activities on the basis of race, national origin, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or associational preference. The University also affirms its commitment to providing equal opportunities and equal access to University facilities. For additional information on nondiscrimination policies, contact the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity, (319) 335-0705 (voice) and (319) 335-0697 (text), 202 Jessup Hall, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1316.



Library
Research in
Context
417:001

THE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
LIBRARIES