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## Introduction

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INFORMATION LITERACY CAN BE DEFINED in terms of information skills needed by all citizens to be successful in the information environment of the twenty-first century. Information literacy standards indicating levels of proficiency for K–12 students, published by the American Association of School Librarians and the Association for Educational Communications and Technology, have been available and in use since 1989. Education departments in many states have mandated the inclusion of information skills teaching throughout the K–12 curricula.

Outcome measurements for information skills developed by the Association of College and Research Libraries in 2000 (<http://www.ala.org/acrl/ilstandardlo.html>) can be addressed in terms of what type of information skills students in higher education need to acquire to become successful students, professionals and researchers and ultimately productive workers in the society of the twenty-first century.

Information literacy includes the following competencies:

- The ability to determine the nature and extent of the information needed;
- The ability to assess needed information effectively and efficiently;
- The ability to evaluate information and its sources critically and to incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base;
- The ability to use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose;
- The ability to understand many of the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information;
- The ability to access and use information ethically and legally.

Integrating information literacy instruction throughout the curricula in the K–12 school environment as well as throughout higher education

needs to become a major goal for librarians, faculty, and teachers. Methodology to accomplish this and related case studies describing actual learning environments in which information skills are taught are described in this issue. The need for information literacy instruction is a global issue and included in this publication are examples from the United States as well as China, the Netherlands, and South Africa.

Assessment strategies and evaluation criteria used to measure the outcomes of information literacy instruction are discussed in some of the articles.

Lori E. Buchanan, DeAnne L. Luck, and Ted C. Jones describe a model course of integrating information literacy into the virtual university environment using Austin Peay State University in Tennessee as an example. A team-teaching process is utilized to teach a core course in the liberal arts online. The ACRL (Association of College and Research Libraries) *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* have been integrated into this course. This graduate course utilizes problem-solving techniques and discussions related to copyright, intellectual property, and Web page design and construction. Students are assessed regarding their acquired information skills through a variety of measures. As a result of the described course, future collaborative partnerships between librarians and faculty will be formed to teach students information literacy competencies.

Karin de Jager and Mary Nassimbeni provide a detailed description of information literacy in higher education in South Africa. They provide an overview of the development of current practices related to information skills teaching and the policy framework surrounding such teaching. Included is a literature survey used to compile a small survey instrument, which helped to establish the current practices. Significant factors affecting information literacy instruction include institutional policies, locating appropriate teach strategies, diversity in students' backgrounds and abilities, and performance assessments.

Ilene F. Rockman discusses how academic librarians' long tradition of collaboration with faculty has advanced the mission and goals of libraries, particularly in the area of information literacy instruction. The rise of the general education reform movement in academia during the last decade has enabled librarians to move into a more formal planning role for general education programs. She shows the value of cooperation to ensuring that information literacy becomes the foundation for student learning and that assessment is a key component of outcome-based information skills instruction.

Jacqueline de Ruiter addresses the needs of older researchers in terms of using the Internet. She discusses how mature information users often have excellent information skills related to print materials but are unable to translate these skills into digital information use. Instruction needs to be provided to mature information users to help them acquire hardware dexterity and navigation skills. Several innovative instructional methods are suggested.

Ping Sun discusses the latest information literacy initiatives in Chinese higher education. Educators and librarians are reviewing traditional information education to prepare for appropriate changes so they can teach information skills in the twenty-first century. The new information and education environment in China is described as well as how faculty and librarians are beginning to collaborate in changing the teaching of information skills by incorporating their own standards and outcome measurements.

Gary Thompson describes how regional accreditation agencies have established mandates for universities to ensure information literacy instruction and appropriate assessment of such learning outcomes. This requirement is forcing higher education institutions to address information skills instruction in terms of forming librarian-faculty partnerships for teaching these skills. Syllabi and curricula need to be systematically updated to incorporate information literacy instruction in a meaningful way. New instructional methods and materials need to be developed to ensure successful collaborations.