Information Fluency @ Illinois State

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Interacting with information is a daily endeavor. Often we don't really register how or what we are processing, as many times it is rote or engrained (don't hit the pedestrian crossing the street or the temperature is 20 degrees F, put on extra layers). Other times we need to think more consciously about the information we interact with (how accurate is that political sound bite or is this medication the best option for my situation?). In today's digital information environment, being a conscious and critical thinker is more important then ever. As life long learners, it is imperative we pursue opportunities to experiment and grow these necessary skills.
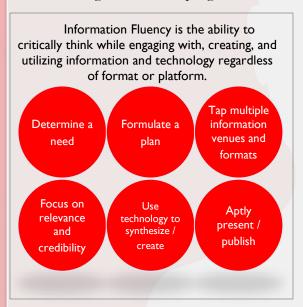
We live in unique times. It is easier and faster to find information then ever before, yet the proliferation of data makes it much harder to find the "good stuff." Today's students, while highly connected to social media, lack proficiency in information and technology skills. Dubbed digital natives and tech-savvy, a false sense of ability has developed. Recent studies found that almost 60% of millennials have poor skills when it comes to problem solving with technology (key skills employers look for); yet 90% of millenials reported possession of these skills or felt the gaps were not a barrier to employment.[1] When searching for information, most students will choose convenience over anything else even if what they perceive to be convenient is not.[2] This demonstrates that utilization of critical thinking often is absent when choosing or incorporating information. More than ever we need to develop "habits of mind … an internalized set of practices essential to critical thinking."[3]

The fundamental ways of how we interact with and create information are the same regardless of the "packaging" or format. While many "literacy" definitions or models separate out these components, it is really an arbitrary construct for the sake of the model or definition. At the cognitive level, the way we think, learn, and engage does not occur in a neatly packaged, linear process; rather it is iterative and multi-layered. Milner Library is committed to enriching the learning environment of Illinois State University through the promotion of Information Fluency.

Unlike the more commonly used phrase "information literacy," Information Fluency takes a holistic approach to the way instructors teach and how students can learn to interact with information related to their studies and personal lives. Moving beyond finding sources, our definition creates the foundation to build programming and teaching opportunities that encourage active learning and higher order thinking. Collaborating with various programs across campus ensures success and enrichment for students.

Information Fluency is the ability to critically think while engaging with, creating, and utilizing information and technology regardless of format or platform.

- Determine a need
- Formulate a plan
- Tap multiple information venues and formats
- Focus on relevance and credibility
- Use technology to synthesize / create
- Aptly present / publish

1. Hart Research Associates. 2015. Falling Short? College Learning and Career Success: Selected Findings from Online Surveys of Employers and College Students Conducted on Behalf of the Association of American Colleges & Universities. Washington, D.C.; Change the Equation. 2015. Does Not Compute: The High Cost of Low Technology Skills in the U.S.--and What We Can Do About It. Washington, D. C.
2. Connaway, Lynn Silipigni, Donna M. Lanclos, and Erin Hood. 2013. "'I always stick with the first thing that comes up on Google.' Where People Go for Information, What They Use, and Why." *EDUCAUSE Review.*
3. Fletcher, Jennifer. 2013. "Critical Habits of Mind." *Liberal Education* 99 (1):50.