Developing the Information-Literacy Skills Pathway

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Introduction & Background

The Psychology Department began by identifying five categories of learning goals: Content, Methods, Critical Thinking, Diversity & Multicultural Awareness, and Communication. Then, we identified learning goals for specific psychology courses. Figure 1 depicts the webpage which made all of this information available to students. Next, we worked with Cathy Beyer, from the Office of Educational Assessment, to create a curricular map (Exhibit 1) that represents how individual course-based learning goals map onto the Psychology Department learning goals.

Phase 1: We began by articulating specific information-literacy skills using the broader literature and pedagogical materials already used in Psychology (e.g., Psychology Writing Center and UW Libraries handouts). Our working definition of information literacy is the ability to locate, retrieve, evaluate, and use information that is appropriate for the need at hand. The six categories of skills are listed below. Exhibit 2 provides a detailed description of each category.

1) Differentiate among Types of Information Sources
2) Search Databases
3) Evaluate Information Sources
4) Use the Literature to help formulate Research Questions
5) Track Citations
6) Scholarly Communication and Peer Review

Phase 2: Next, we created a table with all of the information-literacy skills taught in librarian-led workshops in Psychology classes over the last three years. Then, we built a menu of activities with an appropriate sequence of information-literacy skills development. The overarching structure of these activities is illustrated in Figure 2. Exhibit 3 provides a detailed description of each activity.

Phase 3: To assess how well psychology courses address information-literacy skills, we created a curricular map for the information-literacy skills pathway. Individual professors will be reviewing how their course-specific learning goals fit with the broader departmental learning goals and skill development pathways.

Next Steps

Soon, we will begin to plan assessment of information-literacy skills. We expect information-literacy skills to be assessed in conjunction with communication, methods, and critical-thinking goals by evaluating student work in labs and 400-level classes.

References


Psychology Writing Center and UW Libraries Handouts