



THRESHOLD ACHIEVEMENT TEST FOR INFORMATION LITERACY

Module Descriptions



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Module 1: Evaluating Process & Authority

This module focuses on the process of information creation and the constructed and contextual nature of source authority. There are two knowledge outcomes and three dispositions that make up this module.

Outcome 1.1: Apply knowledge of source creation processes and context to evaluate the authority of a source.

Performance Indicators:

- 1.1.1: Match a description of a creation process to the source type it describes.
- 1.1.2: Match the source type with the amount of time it usually takes to publish it.
- 1.1.3: Match the elements of a source record to what they reveal about the process used to create the source (e.g., publisher name, authors' names, date, subject terms, source type).
- 1.1.4: Match a description of a review process, such as editorial and peer review, to the source type it describes.
- 1.1.5: Arrange a sample set of sources into their appropriate positions on the information cycle.
- 1.1.6: Match an information need to the most authoritative source types (e.g., news agency, government website, scholarly article) for fulfilling that need.
- 1.1.7: Identify the audience for whom a source was created.
- 1.1.8: Identify types of scholarly products and communication modes that fall outside of the typical publication processes but are still worthy of use (e.g., conference presentations, contributed papers, discussions on association websites).
- 1.1.9: Identify relevant questions to ask about sources' origins and context when considering them as support for a claim.
- 1.1.10: Identify factors that would compromise the authority of the peer review process.
- 1.1.11: Match descriptions of popular, polemic, and primary documents to scenarios where it would be appropriate to use them.
- 1.1.12: Recognize that information is created to serve varying interests of information consumers.

Outcome 1.2: Apply knowledge of authority to analyze others' claims and to support one's own claims

Performance Indicators:

- 1.2.1: Identify the sponsor, organization, or institution that provides support for a site.
- 1.2.2: Identify relevant elements of an author's expertise.
- 1.2.3: Know the importance of determining the author when evaluating the authority of a source.
- 1.2.4: Recognize that polished, visually appealing presentation of web content does not equate to authoritative, high-quality content.
- 1.2.5: Recognize that expertise is contextual and positional (e.g., credentials alone are not a per se indicator of author's expertise).
- 1.2.6: Identify relevant questions to ask about the suitability of a source when considering it as support for a claim.
- 1.2.7: Identify information directly relevant to an argument.
- 1.2.8: Recognize the pitfalls of using the superficial indicator "peer review" when evaluating sources for authority.
- 1.2.9: Recognize when a quote from a well-known author or recognized expert is being used by an author to gain authority.
- 1.2.10: Evaluate the effectiveness of an author's use of different source types (e.g., news, research articles, blogs) to support arguments.
- 1.2.11: Determine the reason why a quote is used in a given passage (e.g., show significance, give authoritative support, provide context, emphasize, summarize).
- 1.2.12: Distinguish the key works cited in a passage from the peripheral works.

Disposition 1.1: Mindful self-reflection

Learners who are disposed to demonstrate self-reflection when they are evaluating sources of information consistently question their assumptions about what makes a source authoritative.

Example behaviors:

- Looking for features that challenge one's assumptions about the trustworthiness of one's preferred sources.
- Questioning one's own assumptions about the reliability of traditional forms of scholarly authority.
- Recognizing when there are good reasons to change one's position on an issue.

Disposition 1.2: Toleration of ambiguity

Learners who are disposed to demonstrate toleration for ambiguity when they are evaluating sources of information treat authority as subjective because it is based on the context of the information need.

Example behaviors:

- Deciding what to do when authorities disagree.
- Flexibly using traditional and non-traditional information sources at appropriate points in the research process.
- Treating authority as a flexible concept when information needs can only be met with less traditional sources.

Disposition 1.3: Responsibility to community

Learners who are disposed to demonstrate a sense of responsibility to their community when they are evaluating sources of information are conscientious about how they invoke authority in order to gain credibility with their audiences.

Example behaviors:

- Fulfilling one's responsibility to one's discourse community by using sources carefully.
- Recognizing that the sources one is permitted to use will depend on one's discourse community.
- Taking responsibility for critically evaluating and explaining sources' authority to one's audience when stating and standing by their claims.

Module 2: Strategic Searching

This module focuses on the process of planning, evaluating, and revising searches during strategic exploration. There are two knowledge outcomes and one disposition that make up this module.

Outcome 2.1: Plan, conduct, evaluate, and revise searches to achieve relevant results.

Performance Indicators:

- 2.1.1: Select appropriate basic and advanced search options to satisfy different needs.
- 2.1.2: Identify keyword searching as an appropriate basic search strategy when beginning research.
- 2.1.3: Apply basic search limiters or filters to increase the relevance of results (e.g., checking a "peer-reviewed" or "scholarly journals" box).
- 2.1.4: Given a topic, identify terms and concepts to use in a search for basic background information.
- 2.1.5: Given a description of a research topic, identify keywords.
- 2.1.6: Scan search results for synonyms to use for additional searches.
- 2.1.7: Decide when the number of results makes it worthwhile to read through the individual results.
- 2.1.8: Given a list of results, select titles relevant to the topic.
- 2.1.9: Given a set of results that is too large, select keywords that will effectively narrow search results.
- 2.1.10: Use advanced search syntax such as synonyms and truncation to increase the number of relevant results
- 2.1.11: Apply nested logic structures, Boolean operators, and truncation to successfully construct an advanced search.
- 2.1.12: Use sophisticated search limiters and modifiers to improve search results.

Outcome 2.2: Compare and contrast a range of search tools.

Performance Indicators:

- 2.2.1: Identify differences between search tools such as those on the open web, in a database, and in a library catalog.
- 2.2.2: Understand when it is appropriate to use a web search engine to find information.
- 2.2.3: Compare the types of sources found in different search tools.
- 2.2.4: Identify a range of possible sources, such as scholars, industries, and organizations, that would likely have created or collected useful information on a topic.
- 2.2.5: Match descriptions of scope, content, and limitations to the search tools they describe.

Disposition 2.1: Productive persistence

Learners who are disposed to demonstrate productive persistence during their searches for information approach searching as iterative and not linear by employing alternative strategies and learning from mistakes.

Example behaviors:

- Adapting and evolving new strategies rather than clinging to familiar search techniques.
- Handling feelings of frustration that commonly surface during the search process.
- Recovering from a failed search in order to continue searching until the information need is satisfied.
- Taking constructive assignment feedback from instructors as an impetus to continue searching for better sources.

Module 3: Research & Scholarship

This module focuses on the knowledge-building process and how scholars build knowledge. There are two knowledge outcomes and three dispositions that make up this module.

Outcome 3.1: Understand the processes of scholarly communication and knowledge building.

Performance Indicators:

- 3.1.1: Given a literature review, identify the established knowledge that is summarized or synthesized.
- 3.1.2: Given a literature review, identify the gap that the authors have identified in the existing research.
- 3.1.4: Recognize that scholars bring their own perspectives to the study of a research topic.
- 3.1.5: Categorize common types of sources by whether the authors are expected to list their cited sources.
- 3.1.6: Identify social consequences of scientific falsification.
- 3.1.7: Recognize how interpretations can change based on new research and findings.
- 3.1.8: Identify reasons why scholars track down influential works.
- 3.1.9: Identify venues for scholarly communication, such as books, journals, conventions, blogs.
- 3.1.10: Recognize that research methods change over time.
- 3.1.11: Recognize the value of emerging communication technology for strengthening scholarly communication.
- 3.1.12: Evaluate an emerging scholar's likelihood of being accepted into the scholarly conversation.
- 3.1.13: Given a description of scholarly disagreement, select the interpretation that acknowledges the value of disagreement for moving knowledge forward.
- 3.1.14: Given a set of research needs, match them to appropriate research methods.

Outcome 3.2: Understand stages of the research process.

Performance Indicators:

- 3.2.1: Recognize various ways that high quality research questions can be generated.
- 3.2.2: Identify reasons to begin reading on a subject before solidifying an argument or thesis.
- 3.2.3: Distinguish between goal-oriented and exploratory searching during the research process.
- 3.2.4: Identify the appropriate relationship between a research question and a thesis statement.
- 3.2.5: Order the stages of the research process when writing a research paper.
- 3.2.6: Explain why research inquiry can be appropriate for personal information needs in addition to academic needs.
- 3.2.7: Given text with conflicting perspectives, formulate suitable research questions.
- 3.2.8: Analyze multifaceted research questions to identify component parts for systematic investigation.
- 3.2.9: Given a purpose statement from a research assignment, identify the research question that has an appropriate level of complexity for the information need.
- 3.2.10: Analyze the consequences of disregarding previous research in the early stages of the information creation process.
- 3.2.11: Match problems in specific stages of the research paper process with problems they are likely to cause in the research paper product.
- 3.2.12: Classify descriptions of specific actions taken during the research process by the stage in the research process when they are most likely to happen.

Disposition 3.1: Productive persistence

Learners who are disposed to demonstrate productive persistence throughout the research process approach inquiry as iterative, adjusting their research question as they learn more.

Example behaviors:

- Applying appropriate methods/practices of inquiry regardless of their complexity or negative emotional associations (e.g., frustration).
- Committing to building a knowledge base through background research when exploring an unfamiliar topic.

Disposition 3.2: Mindful self-reflection

Learners who are disposed to demonstrate self-reflection in the context of research and scholarship consistently question their own assumptions as they are challenged by new knowledge.

Example behaviors:

- Spending time exploring a topic with openness and curiosity before committing to a thesis or claim.
- Using critiques from professors, librarians, and peers to improve the quality of their inquiry.

Disposition 3.3: Responsibility to community

Learners who are disposed to demonstrate a sense of responsibility to the scholarly community recognize and conform to academic norms of knowledge building.

Example behaviors:

- Identifying and pursuing appropriate ways to enter the scholarly conversation while still an undergraduate.
- Seeking out and following established models of scholarship and inquiry.

Module 4: Value of Information

This module focuses on about information ethics and the value of information. There are two knowledge outcomes and two dispositions that make up this module.

Outcome 4.1: Recognize the rights and responsibilities of information creation.

Performance Indicators:

- 4.1.1: Identify reasons why plagiarism is prohibited.
- 4.1.2: Determine whether or not a passage is plagiarized.
- 4.1.3: Identify appropriate citation options when using material from a source that is cited within the source at hand.
- 4.1.4: Identify the type of plagiarism when presented with a plagiarized passage.
- 4.1.5: Recognize the benefits of copyright protections.
- 4.1.6: Given a list, select the purposes of citation.
- 4.1.7: Recognize the rights and interests of human subjects participating in research studies.
- 4.1.8: Recognize that where a source is found has no bearing on whether or not the source should be cited.

Outcome 4.2: Recognize social, legal, and economic factors affecting access to information.

Performance Indicators:

- 4.2.1: Recognize how reporting on the same event offers disparate levels of coverage when the sources are written to be disseminated in different venues.
- 4.2.2: Identify the relationship between individuals' organizational affiliations and their access to information.
- 4.2.3: Identify reasons that some people's views are not disseminated to the larger community.
- 4.2.5: Identify the meaning and scope of the concept of intellectual property.
- 4.2.6: Identify the circumstances in which one's personal information may be used by other individuals, groups, and organizations.
- 4.2.7: Identify reasons that access to information may be restricted, including copyright, licensing, and other practices.
- 4.2.8: Distinguish among the common reasons that information may be freely available, including open access, public domain, and other practices.

Disposition 4.1: Mindful self-reflection

Learners who are disposed to demonstrate self-reflection in the context of the information ecosystem recognize and challenge information privilege.

Example behaviors:

- Considering how to use existing intellectual property to spur creative work without violating the creators' rights.
- Participating in informal networks to reduce disparities caused by the commodification of information.
- Recognizing and suggesting ways to reduce the negative effects of the unequal distribution of information.

Disposition 4.2: Responsibility to community

Learners who are disposed to demonstrate a sense of responsibility to the scholarly community recognize and conform to academic norms of knowledge building.

Example behaviors:

- Accessing scholarly sources through formal channels.
- Avoiding plagiarism in their own work and discouraging plagiarism by others.
- Recognizing the value of their own original contributions to the scholarly conversation.