Duquesne University Definition of Information Literacy

Adopted by Academic Council 4/2013

The Information Literacy Steering Committee (Dr. David Carbonara and Ms. Diana Sasso, co-chairs; Marcia Rapchak, Greg Barnhisel, Melanie Turk, Gary Shank, Lori Marra, Lorraine Sauchin, Laverna Saunders) recommends the adoption of the following proposed campus working definition of information literacy (based on the ILSC’s focus groups and committee discussion 2005; revised 3/30/13):

Information literacy is an intellectual framework for identifying, finding, understanding, evaluating, and using information. Mastery of these skills is essential for lifelong learning and is the foundation of Duquesne University’s special trust of seeking truth and disseminating knowledge within a moral and spiritual context.

In practice, information literacy is the ability to expand one’s knowledge framework by ethically and effectively locating, evaluating and integrating information.

An information literate individual can:
1. Determine the nature and extent of information needed.
2. Access needed information effectively and efficiently.
3. Evaluate information and its sources critically.
4. Integrate relevant information into one’s knowledge framework.
5. Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose.
6. Access and use information ethically and legally, respecting Duquesne’s Academic Integrity policy and the University’s mission.
7. Understand economic, legal and social implications regarding the principled use of information.

Documents used in the development of Duquesne’s definition of information literacy:

Middle States’ definition of information literacy (Characteristics of Excellence, p. 42):
Several skills, collectively referred to as “information literacy,” apply to all disciplines in an institution’s curricula. These skills relate to a student’s competency in acquiring and processing information in the search for understanding, whether that information is sought in or through the facilities of a library, through practica, as a result of field experiments, by communications with experts in professional communities, or by other means. Therefore, information literacy is an essential component of any educational program at the graduate or undergraduate levels.
These skills include the ability to:
- Determine the nature and extent of needed information;
- Access information effectively and efficiently;
- Evaluate critically the sources and content of information;
- Incorporate selected information in the learner’s knowledge base and value system;
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose;
- Understand the economic, legal and social issues surrounding the use of information and information technology; and
- Observe laws, regulations, and institutional policies related to the access, and use of information.

Duquesne University Core Curriculum p.14 and Dimensions of a Duquesne Education