Information Literacy Strategic Plan: 2018-2021

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Prepared by: Liz Fulton-Lyne, Library Services
Introduction

The *Information Literacy Strategic Plan 2018-2021* guides NorQuest College Library's information literacy (IL) instruction objectives over the next 3 years. It outlines the guiding principles and strategic objectives of the library instruction program as it evolves to support new and expanding academic programs across the college, as well as a growing number of learners.

**Background**

In the last several years, NorQuest College has seen unprecedented growth – from 10,220 learners in 2013 to 17,592 in 2016-2017. The footprint of the college has also grown. In the fall of 2017, the library moved into a new and much larger space in the Singhmar Centre for Learning (SCFL). The new Learner Centre continues to be a busy full-service learning facility. It houses the Tutorial Centre, Writing Centre and larger Computer Commons, in addition to a children’s library, student meeting rooms, and large open spaces for collaboration and quiet study.

A number of recent developments across the college require consideration as we plan. These include:

- Significant and continuing growth in our international student population;
- Indigenization: NorQuest signed the Indigenous Education Protocol for Colleges and Institutes of Canada (CICan) and launched *Wahkôhtowin: We are All Related* (2017), a comprehensive Indigenization Strategy;
- Ambitious growth targets in general – 40,000 learners by 2025 – set by the College in its new strategic plan: *IMAGINE: NorQuest 2025 Strategic Plan*.
- Continuing expansion of alternate program delivery modes including online, hybrid, evening and weekend classes;
- A new *Program Plan to 2025* identifying 50 new credit programs for development as well as a *Fast-Track New Program Development Plan* identifying 15 new programs for development over the next 3 years;
- A new Arts and Sciences program beginning Fall 2019. The library and instructional librarians will be supporting new subject areas and a greater number of research and writing assignments.

Additional changes in recent years continue to impact the operation of our library instruction program:

- Collaboration with tutors in the operation of the Writing Centre. The Writing Centre is a firmly entrenched component of the information literacy instruction continuum;
- The implementation of the Liaison Librarian program in 2016 and the addition of new library faculty positions have driven higher demand for library instruction;
- The *ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education* (2015) is now the guiding document for IL curriculum development and instruction replacing the *ACRL Information Competency Standards for Higher Education* (rescinded June, 2016);
A combination of academic integrity concerns, higher citation expectations, and student anxiety continue to fuel high demand for citation assistance via WC appointments, chat reference, drop-in questions at the library desk, and classroom library instruction.

**Information Literacy and NorQuest learners**

Information literacy, the ability to discover, evaluate, and use information for the purposes of learning and creating new knowledge, is a complex set of interrelated skills. In communities of learning and in the workplace, information literacy enables individuals to think critically and engage ethically with information in order to solve problems and further their own understanding. Students with information literacy skills such as the ability to do research, to analyze and document information, are better prepared for the workplace, and better equipped for lifelong learning. According to recent studies, employers want workers who can locate, organize, interpret, and interact with information effectively and efficiently (Malafi, Liu, & Goldstein, 2017). In 1999, Anthony Comper, then president of the Bank of Montreal, famously explained the importance of information literacy to a University of Toronto graduating class:

> Whatever else you bring to the 21st century workplace, however great your technical skills and however attractive your attitude and however deep your commitment to excellence, the bottom line is that to be successful, you need to acquire a high level of information literacy. What we need in the knowledge industries are people who know how to absorb and analyze and integrate and create and effectively convey information—and who know how to use information to bring real value to everything they undertake. (as cited in Duncan & Varcoe, 2012, pp. 7-8)

Librarians and professional bodies such as the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) recognize that students, like all individuals, are faced with a limitless amount of information choices. While libraries continue to provide students with vetted information resources, information is also available via the internet in countless unfiltered formats. The uncertain quality of information raises many questions for students regarding the reliability, authenticity and credibility sources (ACRL, 2000). With instruction, students can learn how to better navigate their information environments and be discerning in their information choices. They can learn how to locate and use information more effectively for a specific purpose such as writing a report or a research paper, and more clearly understand challenging concepts such as copyright and citation. A growing body of research links information literacy instruction to improved student success indicators including higher GPAs and retention (Laskin & Zoe, 2017). Still more research continues to highlight the importance of information literacy and related critical thinking abilities as valued assets in the workplace (Gashurov & Matsuuchi, 2013; Inskip, 2014; Malafi, Liu & Goldstein, 2017). Most would agree that information literacy is an essential component of a post-secondary education.
Mission Statement

NorQuest library’s Instruction Program supports the academic mission of the college to inspire lifelong learning and the achievement of career goals by offering workforce relevant education. In carrying out the library’s educational mission, we champion the development of information literacy skills in our diverse college communities regardless of physical location.

Vision

NorQuest Library’s Instruction Program is recognized for its creativity, inclusivity, and excellence in developing the information literacy skills of students with diverse educational backgrounds. NorQuest students will develop the critical and reflective thinking abilities needed to ethically use, manage, and evaluate information in order to advance their own learning, and excel in their lives, education, and careers.

Our information literacy program is guided by these core principles:

- **Collaboration.** Our goals can only be fulfilled through collaboration between librarians, library and learning support staff, faculty and college stakeholders.

- **Learner focus.** We are committed to meeting all learners where they are at, at any stage of their learning.

- **Evaluation.** In order to ensure evidence-based decision making and continuous improvement, we will assess student learning and stakeholder satisfaction with the instruction program on an ongoing basis using a variety of methods.

- **Flexibility and responsiveness.** Just as a flexible and responsive approach makes for great teaching, it is also essential as NorQuest evolves to include a growing number of new programs, curricula, and learners. Innovation (combined with thoughtful evaluation) and risk-taking are encouraged.

Goals

The following goals are set for 2018-2021:

1) **Curriculum:** We will renew our IL curriculum to align with the unique requirements of NorQuest learners.

2) **Integration:** We will collaborate with faculty partners to ensure learners are given appropriate opportunities to build IL skills over the course of their programs.

3) **Delivery:** We will develop new, and improve existing, channels of library instruction to accommodate non-traditional program delivery options (synchronous or asynchronous, blended, online, regional, part-time, full-time, evening/weekend, etc.) and diverse learner needs.
4) **Engagement:** We will engage students, faculty, library staff, tutors, and campus stakeholders in conversations to raise awareness about information literacy and develop new partnerships to support learners in acquiring these skills.

**Institutional impact indicators**

Broad impact measures of our information literacy activities over the next 3 years (2018-2021) are proposed:

- The concept of information literacy is articulated in key NorQuest cross-institutional documents;
- The extent to which information literacy is integrated in the curriculum of academic programs;
- The level of library representation in college-wide teaching and learning initiatives and/or committees;
- The level of collaboration on IL-related projects between the library and faculty;
- The level of student satisfaction with IL instruction provided by library faculty and staff;
- The level of faculty satisfaction with IL instruction and support.

**Strategic Objectives**

The Instruction Team will create annual action plans each spring to identify specific objectives, timelines, and resource needs. Progress on goals achieved will be reported annually. If objectives need to be added, adjusted, or cannot be met, explanations and documentation will be included in annual reports.

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<th>Goals</th>
<th>Strategic Objectives 2018-2021*</th>
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<td><strong>1) Curriculum</strong>&lt;br&gt;We will renew our IL curriculum to meet the unique needs of NorQuest learners and ensure workforce relevance.</td>
<td>1. Create a new IL curriculum framework to guide review and design of lesson plans, learning activities, and assessments. New IL curriculum will embrace:&lt;br&gt;- Workplace or “workforce relevant” information literacy;&lt;br&gt;- Equity and diversity, including critical IL concepts related to human rights (based on gender, sexuality, race/ethnicity, age, disability, etc.); Internationalization, and principles of Indigenization and decolonization;&lt;br&gt;- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to build in flexibility and reduce barriers for learners. Framework will align with college-wide learning outcomes (CWLO’s), CWPA’s Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing (2011), the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy</td>
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(2016), NorQuest’s Quality Curriculum Framework, and the NorQuest Learner Experience.

2. Implement new methodologies and strategies to evaluate IL instruction for quality and impact.

3. Enhance citation curriculum.

### 2) Integration

We will collaborate with faculty partners to ensure learners are given appropriate opportunities to build IL skills over the course of their programs.

1. Explore the application of different models of course level and program level IL integration (i.e. module-based learning, LMS-embedded librarian, stand-alone IL course/tutorial, etc.)

2. Identify IL learning outcomes and/or gaps in programs and work with faculty to integrate IL strategically in courses and programs.

3. Create a standard Moodle integration process to facilitate embedding library resources in Moodle courses.

4. Ensure that faculty are supported with a range of options for embedding IL into online, blended and face-to-face courses.

### 3) Delivery

We will develop new, and improve existing, channels of library instruction to accommodate non-traditional program delivery options (synchronous or asynchronous, blended, online, regional, part-time, full-time, evening/weekend, etc.) and diverse learner needs.

1. Evaluate the look, feel, and accessibility of library-designed IL resources.

2. Evaluate, review, and reimagine current IL delivery methods and resources.

3. Expand IL distance delivery models in order to equitably serve all learners regardless of physical location.

### 4) Engagement

We will engage students, faculty, library staff, tutors and campus stakeholders in conversations to raise awareness about information literacy and develop new partnerships to support learners in acquiring these skills.

1. Leverage established Liaison role to enhance faculty and staff engagement with the library’s educational objectives.

2. Engage stakeholders in the development of IL learning resources and initiatives.

3. Redevelop library orientation programs to benefit faculty and students regardless of their physical location.

4. Advocate for explicit articulation of IL concepts/learning outcomes in college curriculum development processes.

*Given projected program and enrolment targets, changing learner demographics, and the disruptive trajectory of college as outlined in “Imagine: NorQuest 2025 Strategic Plan,” IL strategy objectives are subject to change.
References


