

QEP Proposal Working Document

I) Short, Descriptive Title

(See SACSCOC summary page of QEPs for examples: <https://sacscoc.org/quality-enhancement-plans/>)

Empowering Bobcats: Digital Research and Information Literacy at Georgia College

Locate - Create - Evaluate - Communicate



II) Vision/Rationale/Statement of the Problem: Summary of Your QEP Idea

(Please include evidence, internal and/or external to GC, to explain why this topic is important, meaningful, and significant, and related to student success. Include references where applicable.)

Today's traditional first-year, college students are considered digital natives. Born and raised on the internet, most seem to know more about technology than their adult counterparts. Although students may be comfortable using the internet, that familiarity does not necessarily translate into information literacy skills. Students struggle to navigate the digital environment, develop search strategies, manage resources, and evaluate information. (Head, 2013). According to Head, Fister and MacMillan (2020) students experience a great deal of cynicism when evaluating information sources. In their study of how college students conceptualize the ever-changing online information landscape, students did not find the critical thinking skills taught in college prepared them to manage the volume of information they encountered in their daily lives. Lanning and Mallek (2017) find students are "deeply skeptical" of the information they find from experts and of news outlets. In addition, "faculty exacerbate

the problem by believing that students will develop information literacy skills independently through their research, even though they, the faculty, do not have a clear expectation of how the students will specifically gain this knowledge” (Lanning & Mallek, 2017).

In addition, employers expect our graduates to have the basic skills necessary to compete in a world besieged with information. Employers such as Microsoft, Nationwide Insurance, the Smithsonian, and the FBI said they “expected candidates whatever their field, to be able to search online... but they also expected job candidates to be patient and persistent researchers and to be able to retrieve information in a variety of formats, identify patterns within an array of sources, and dive deeply into source material” (Head & Wihbey, 2014). Many of these same employers noted that new college graduates lacked the ability for deep research and analysis, and found new graduates tended to quickly pull the first answer, rather than critically analyze their resources resulting in insufficient results.

This QEP will use the definition of information literacy from the Academic College and Research Libraries framework (2016) which defines information literacy “as a set of integrated abilities encompassing the reflective discovery of information, the understanding of how information is produced and valued, and the use of information in creating new knowledge and participating ethically in communities of learning”. Essentially, students are taught to produce information but rarely to reflect on the value of information and how to engage in inquiry as a civic practice.

Currently, Information Literacy is one of Georgia College’s nine core outcomes for student learning. However, at this time only one course GEOG 2100 is tagged with the information literacy outcome for campus. Georgia College has no current plans, nor has it ever assessed information literacy in a comprehensive manner. Fister (2021) says it best that information literacy “it’s everywhere, and nowhere. It’s everyone’s job, but nobody’s responsibility”. The QEP will address this concern by implementing a scaffolded approach to teaching information literacy and assessing information literacy across all disciplines filling the gap in student assessment.

III) Expected Outcomes

(What are the anticipated student learning outcomes related to student knowledge, skills, behaviors, and/or values?)

Adapted from the Academic College and Research Libraries (ACRL) Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education 2016

SLO #1 Locate (Module 2 TATIL) Students will be able to develop and articulate research strategies in order to fulfill an information need.

SLO #2 Create (Module 4 TATIL) Students will be able to distinguish information in terms of its accessibility and its role in knowledge-building.

SLO #3 Evaluate (Module 1 TATIL) Students will be able to evaluate the authority of a source, analyze others' claims and to support one's own claims.

LO #4 Communicate (Module 3 TATIL) Students will be able to communicate on ethical, legal and socio-economic issues surrounding information discovery, use, and creation.

The four student learning objectives are based on a conceptual framework developed by the Academic College and Research Libraries (ACRL) association, appropriately entitled The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. Adopted in 2016, the ACRL Framework provides the lens and dispositions on which the QEP program will be based. The original framework consists of six frames which keep information literacy at the core of the program's curriculum (Framework for Information Literacy Appendices, 2015).

IV) Student Population

(The QEP does not have to involve all students but it should include a significant and substantial portion of the student population or sub-population. Please describe which students will be primarily involved in this QEP.)

Information literacy is relevant across all disciplines and prepares students to access, evaluate and critically analyze information for themselves and become critical information consumers and producers. Specifically, the curriculum integration plan will allow the QEP to involve the entire student population through the First-Year Seminar program and capstone courses. Additional outreach programs, workshops, and virtual support will also be available to all students.

V) Strategies/Actions/Activities

(What are the major anticipated activities, programs, projects that will students, faculty, staff will engage in for this QEP?)

The QEP would consist of three parts.

Part I: The Center

The QEP would allow for the creation of the Center for Digital Research and Information Studies (CDRIS). The CDRIS Center would be an expansion of the current Instruction and Research Services within the Russell Library, allowing the campus to leverage existing campus resources.

The Center would collaborate with faculty, staff, and students to integrate digital research and information literacy skills into the university curriculum. Utilizing engaging and transformational pedagogies in information literacy instruction, the center would provide virtual and in-person resources for the campus community. The center would also implement campus-wide assessment of information literacy utilizing the Threshold Achievement Test for Information Literacy, allowing the center to gather evidence of student progression toward information literacy proficiency.

In addition to integrating information literacy instruction into the curriculum, the Center for Digital Research and Information Studies would offer an array of workshops and an annual “Digital Research and Information Studies Annual Symposium” that would host interdisciplinary speakers on a range of topics associated with information literacy including but not limited to:

- o Information Policy
- o Information Organization
- o Human-Computer Interactions
- o Information Economics
- o Society and Information
- o Community Informatics
- o Archives and Preservation
- o Computing for Social Good
- o Information Ethics
- o Information Access

The center would also conduct one-on-one research consultations with students virtually and in-person. The center would serve as a drop-in center for faculty to discuss their own research and/or how to incorporate information literacy into their specific courses. The center would also supply resources for faculty to integrate digital resources into the learning management system including online modules, embedded librarians and other virtual resources.

Part II: Training

The second part of the QEP would consist of training for faculty and students to assist in scaffolding information into the Georgia College curriculum.

Russell Library Ambassadors

The library ambassadors' program would consist of GC Faculty who are interested in incorporating information literacy components into their courses. Library faculty will collaborate with and train GC faculty on integrating information literacy components into their individualized courses. Special consideration will be given to those GC faculty teaching discipline specific capstone courses.

Russell Library Peer Educators

Peer Educators will serve as the main facilitators for instruction within First Year Seminar and TREK courses. Peer Educators would also work as peer research consultants within the Center for Digital Research and Information Studies.

Part III: Standardized Curriculum and Co-Curricular Integration

Standardized Curriculum

A scaffolded approach to information literacy

First Year Seminars and (TREK)

Introductory sessions would be conducted by members of the peer educator team.

Integrated within Capstone courses

Tailored research sessions would be integrated into each capstone course across campus. These sessions would either be conducted by library faculty unless the course instructor has attended and successfully completed the library ambassadors' program. Library ambassadors would be trained to cover the capstone sessions during the ambassador program.

Campus Wide Opt-In Integration

- Workshops
- Research Consultation Program
- Online modules and virtual resources
- Research Center Consultations

Co-Curricular

Digital Research and Information Studies Annual Symposium

Travel Grants for faculty (including library faculty) to attend information literacy conferences. Special consideration will be given to faculty who plan to present their research. Example: Georgia International Conference on Information Literacy, LOEX Conference, Librarian Information Literacy Annual Conference (LILAC), European Conference on Information Literacy etc.

VI) Possible Means of Assessing Outcomes/Activities

(How will we demonstrate student learning and student success?)

A viable assessment plan is included with measurable goals and targets. The assessment plan is practical and sustainable for the proposed QEP.

The QEP will be assessed at both the course-level and at the institutional level on a continuing basis.

Quantitative

Threshold Achievement Test for Information Literacy will be used to establish a baseline for incoming freshmen. The test will then be used each year to track student progression toward information literacy proficiency. The Threshold Achievement Test also allows for cross-institutional comparisons with peer institutions and other institutional groupings.

The program will track recruitment of faculty library ambassadors across all academic disciplines with a target of 100% Department participation. Goal of at least one participating faculty member per department by end of QEP.

Assessments will be deployed to assess the Russell Library Ambassadors program with an objective of 85% of faculty perceiving the program training as effective or higher.

Assessments will be deployed to assess the Russell Library's Peer-Educators program with an objective of 85% of peer-educators perceiving the program training and experience as effective or higher.

Assessment tools will be developed to assess information literacy proficiency in FYS and Capstone programs which will allow a two-pronged approach to accessing the four SLOs of the QEP.

Qualitative

Assessment tools will be developed for faculty/staff and student feedback in FYS Seminars and Capstone courses to assess faculty and student perceptions of the integration of information literacy within the course

An advisory board of students, faculty, librarians, and staff will meet at least twice a semester to share their needs, ask questions, and work to continually improve the program.

Utilizing current assessments and new assessment tools SLOs will be tracked and assessed via workshops, consultations, and research center interactions.

VII) Anticipated Resources Needed

(What dedicated resources might this QEP need including personnel, financial, dedicated time, space, materials, etc...)

- Funding for Faculty Ambassadors
- Funding for Peer Educators
 - 5 Peer Educators a year
- Threshold Achievement Test for Information Literacy
 - Pricing: Unlimited Annual Contract \$.50 per student enrolled.
- Position Request
 - Information Literacy Coordinator(s)

- Digital Research and Information Studies Annual Symposium
- Miscellaneous Supplies
- Travel Grants
- Professional Development for Center Staff
- Marketing

References

Alison J. Head (December 5, 2012), *Learning the ropes: How freshmen conduct course research once they enter college*, Project Information Literacy Research Institute,

<https://projectinfolit.org/publications/first-year-experience-study/>

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Cornforth, J., & Parramore, S. (2021). Student educators as facilitators of learning: A model for peer education in academic library instruction. *The Journal of Creative Library Practice*.

<https://creativelibrarypractice.org/2021/08/10/student-educators/>

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