Articulation of Teaching Statement

Penrose Instructional and Research Librarians teach the concepts and skills students need to discover and use information.

To succeed in a changing technological, multicultural world students must consider not only how to access and use library resources but also how and why library and information systems are constructed. This involves an appreciation of how information sources are created, how they are recognized as authoritative, and the iterative nature of the research and writing process. Understanding these concepts enables students to contribute to scholarly conversations within and across various disciplines that have their own contexts and traditions.

In collaboration with faculty, librarians teach conventions of research, methodology, and attribution that are the foundation of scholarship. By recognizing their rights and responsibilities as researchers and producers of information, students develop an appreciation of the ethics and value of information: who benefits from information dissemination, what barriers exists to accessing information, and how and why copyright, citation conventions, and open access principles apply.

By teaching these concepts about information systems and scholarship, librarians help students acquire foundational information literacy skills including posing viable research questions, identifying appropriate sources from the range of possibilities (print, electronic, archival), and developing search strategies. Because information is organized and accessed differently in different spaces, different search strategies for library collections, internet collections, and archival collections are required. Identifying sources entails the applied understanding of citation conventions, metadata, and the description of information.

Librarians teach the process of evaluating and interrogating sources within the context of disciplinary norms and expectations, enabling students to make decisions about when they have enough information to say something meaningful about a topic. Such awareness empowers students to enact their scholarship in various contexts (e.g., digital versus analog, public versus scholarly) and to understand the implications of such choices.

This statement is inspired by the Association of College and Research Libraries' Framework for Information Literacy. It contextualizes and defines information literacy for Whitman's liberal arts environment.