

Faculty Retreat: DH 549 “Head Room,” Friday, September 28, Luncheon 12-1, Meeting 1-4.

Why discuss information competency?

To appreciate why we are addressing information competency, please scan the items listed under ACRL Standards 3 and 4. The phrases “information gathered,” “new knowledge,” “initial inquiry,” “interpretation of the information,” and “communicates the product” could just as easily refer to how students manage their lab reports as to how students manage their term papers. Although the primary source of information differs (lab results vs. library), the critical thinking skills involved should be comparable, if not identical. What if students in every required course were asked to find and evaluate just one research article relevant to a lab report or analyze a single journal article’s data that pertains to just one content goal for a course? Just one such assignment in every required course, together with courses that already seem to address the other ACRL standards, may be enough reinforcement for our graduates’ abilities to handle information critically. What if we are not providing enough opportunity across our courses for promoting information competency for our graduates? We need to discover the extent to which our required courses contribute to the repertoire of skills for independent thinking and the means by which we most effectively can address areas of need.

Objectives for Retreat:

- Identify for all required courses any assignments that address any of the items listed for the ACRL standards.

We will assemble a matrix showing the extent to which the courses in our programs collectively meet information competency standards.

- Identify from Greensheets for all required courses any statements (course objectives, goals, etc.) relating to the assignments identified above and make them more explicit, if need be.

Explicit objectives in Greensheets will demonstrate cohesiveness for critical thinking/ info comp goals across the department and the rigor of our curriculum.

- Determine which required courses need to provide foundational skills for more advanced courses, whose assignments require certain levels of information competency/ critical thinking ability. Propose for required courses critical thinking/info comp assignments that would benefit the overall program.

Cohesive program planning here will allow instructors for advanced courses to focus on higher-order thinking skills (as in ACRL Standard 3) if they can safely assume that students already know the more pedestrian skills in ACRL Standards 1 and 2.

Bring: This handout, yourself (even if for only part of the retreat), and ideas for the issues above.