Section:

Why IL Matters

Lesson:

Why IL Matters

Learning Objectives:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

• Understand what information literacy is and why it is important in school, the workplace, and society
• Know resources available to build information literacy skills
• Identify how information is needed and used in everyday life
• Set goals to build information literacy skills

Components:

• Video – Life in the Information Age
• Video – Information Skills You Need

Introduction (real world relevance):

In today’s world, information skills – critical thinking and problem solving – are essential to success in the workplace and in everyday life. Decisions ranging from purchases to healthcare rely on sound information literacy skills. Being conscious of the variety of information available and basing your decisions on sound evaluation and reasoning will significantly impact your life.

Discussion Topics:

What is Information Literacy?

Have students brainstorm the meaning of information literacy. This can take place as a classroom discussion or as small group discussions. Expanded discussion might include the definition/nature of information, how information is conveyed and used, and the definition of “literacy” in this instance.
Breaking down information literacy elements:
Utilizing IL standards and/or threshold concepts, breakdown IL as steps or concepts based on nature of class or student level. An example might be breaking down IL into the following “steps”: Recognizing an information need, knowing where to look for information (how to look, resources available - library, internet, people, etc. - what can they use?, why should they use these resources?, etc.), Evaluating information (including gray areas of information), Using information, ethics, etc. The breakdown of IL skills may depend on class time, student level, subject focus, or other factors.

The nature of information
What is Information? Have students brainstorm ideas about the nature of information. Some discussion starters might include: Information vs. Knowledge, Information vs. Data, Does information have to be factual to be considered information? How is information conveyed/transmitted? - This question lends itself to discussions of printed information, images/art, body language, spoken language, etc. This may be a rich area to explore and can be used across a variety of disciplines.

Evaluating Information
A real world conversation about evaluation: examples could include medical topics, large purchases, news sources, social media, mockumentaries, gossip, etc. Ask students how they would go about evaluating information they find on Twitter, Facebook, or other social media options. Have students ever encountered a documentary or mockumentary? How did they tell the difference? Do students question news sources? Do they look at multiple sources of information when encountering a news story that catches their interests?

Sharing Information
How do students share findings? Research papers, social media, conversations, etc? Do they understand their place in the larger world of information and progress? Brainstorm avenues of sharing or packaging information for others. What about ethics when it comes to information sharing? How does society factor into sharing information. Societal factors may be a good place to look at various countries and censorship issues.

Focus on learning new skills
Information Literacy requires us to learn new skills and technologies in order to access and share information. What technologies have students encountered or would like to learn more about when it comes to access, evaluation, and sharing information?

Lifelong learning
Discuss the following:

“A broad term that encompasses the full spectrum of an individual's educational experiences from traditional school to other forms of learning, which may include nonformal, informal, and self-directed learning. The term is often used in connection with adult
education in the higher-education setting. It also is used in the occupational and professional development setting. Lifelong learning refers to a lifelong commitment to continual learning and personal development and improvement."[1]

Why/how are information literacy skills important in the workplace?

Have students discuss ways in which IL skills could apply to their ideal jobs after graduation. Technology skills can also factor into this discussion.

Overall Discussion options:

Develop a humorous list of made up symptoms and have the students discuss IL skills as a process of discovery. If they have a set of symptoms, what is their information need? Where can they go for information? Where should they go for information? Are some sources of information better than others? Why? Are some sources more gray-not necessarily wrong or right? How do they evaluate the information they find? How would they evaluate their doctor’s diagnosis? Are there ethical implications of the information they’ve discovered? Should they use the new found information to diagnose others with similar symptoms?

OR

Ask the students how they handle gossip. Do they question, out loud or silently, the source of the information, the biases, etc? This is a good place to have students explore their own personal biases and how that factors into their evaluation of information. This is also something that shows real world application of IL skills and social ethics.

Activities

Information log – Ask the student to record any piece of information he/she looked up (or wanted to look up) over the course of the day. Examples: What is being served at the cafeteria or café, how much something costs, when the next bus is scheduled to depart, or the due date of an assignment.

Alternatively, ask students to keep a log of questions asked by others. How do they respond to others’ questions? How do they help others find information?

These activities can also lead to research topics and discussions on the social nature of information.

More Resources

Information Literacy Section of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) - http://www.ifla.org/information-literacy
Project Information Literacy - http://projectinfolit.org/
national study about early adults and their information-seeking behaviors, competencies, 
and the challenges they face when conducting research in the digital age. Includes several 
publications and videos presenting research findings.

Hart Research Associates. (2013, April 10). Employer priorities for college learning and 
student success. Retrieved from

York: Neal Schuman Publishers, Inc.