



INFORMATION LITERACY COMPETENCY
MISSION STATEMENT

College of San Mateo Library's instructional program is founded on the recommendations of the Association of College and Research Library's *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* (<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlstandards/standards.pdf>), which define information literacy competency as: "a set of abilities requiring individuals to recognize when information is needed and have the ability to locate, evaluate, and use effectively the needed information."

This document enumerates several core components of information literacy competency, including the ability to:

- Determine the extent of information needed;
- Access the needed information effectively and efficiently;
- Evaluate information and its sources critically;
- Incorporate selected information into one's knowledge base;
- Use information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose;
- Understand the economic, legal, and social issues surrounding the use of information, and access and use information ethically and legally.

We believe that information literacy competency is an essential prerequisite to both academic success and success beyond the classroom. Only those students who are information literate will be able to adapt to an increasingly complex and changing information environment and become lifelong learners. And while technologies for distributing and accessing information will continue to evolve, the underlying principles of information organization and access, and the competencies needed to locate, retrieve, and evaluate information, will remain unchanged.

The Library supports information literacy competency through the following instructional programs and services:

- One-on-one reference service to students, faculty and community members, in person, on the phone, and through e-mail and live chat.
- Pathfinders and online tutorials.
- Hands-on group instruction in the library's classroom on using the online catalog and databases.
- Credit classes in research skills, including how to develop a research question, identify key search terms, locate books and articles, evaluate sources for authenticity and reliability, respect copyright, avoid plagiarism, and cite sources.
- Collaboration with subject faculty to imbed information literacy instruction throughout the curriculum.

As a community college library, our patrons come from diverse backgrounds, differing widely in life experiences, familiarity with technology, physical abilities, and proximity to campus. We are committed to providing instruction to our patrons in the manner, place, and time that works best for them. Whenever possible, we seek to employ active learning strategies to increase engagement in the learning process. Rather than "handing" students answers to their questions, we try to teach them to find the answers on their own and to reflect critically on the process of information access and evaluation.

Information literacy competency requires the application of critical thinking and communication skills, thereby fostering the development of students, employees, and citizens who are informed, independent, self-sufficient and self-directed lifelong learners. The Library encourages students, faculty, staff, and administrators to recognize the importance of information literacy competency and to work with us to foster an increased integration of information literacy skills into the academic and workforce preparation of all students.

(03/2006)