

# Closing the HWC InfoLit Loop

*New Approaches for an Old Problem*

By Shana Cooper and Todd Heldt



# What is Information Literacy?

**The definition has changed because EVERYTHING has changed!**



**Authority Is Constructed and Contextual**

**Information Has Value**

**Research as Inquiry**

**Scholarship as Conversation**

**Searching as Strategic Exploration**

# **Our Media Landscape has Changed:**

- **Students receive nearly all of their information online.**
- **Once-trusted news sources' credibility is questioned.**
- **The availability of information has moved faster than our ability to understand it.**
- **All voices are elevated, muddying the waters of credibility, of whom to trust.**
- **Trusted sources, like Government websites, have changed.**



# Outside the Classroom Students:

- Retreat into information bubbles
- Trust friends over credible sources
- Detach from consuming news or current events
- Believe misinformation, disinformation, or fake news
- Fall prey to schemes and scams or predatory online behavior
- Lose trust in all media content
- Lose trust in institutions
- Do not trust their own ability to find and seek real information



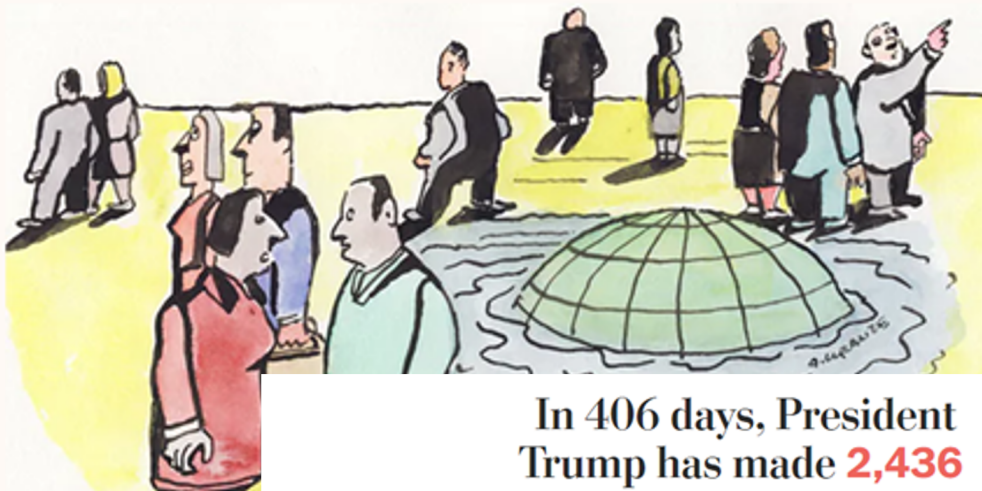
# Challenge:

## Our students need more help with information literacy skills...

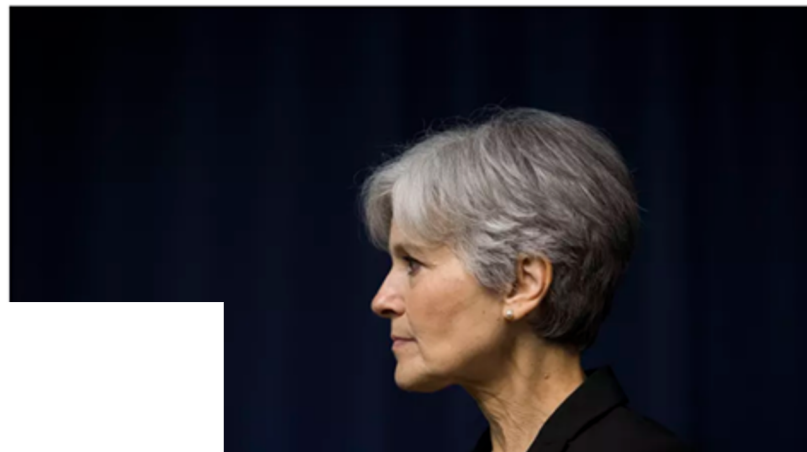
### Students:

- struggle to understand online content
- may not use credible sites
- are often confused as to what qualifies as credible
- either rely on non-credible sources or give up completely
- Are afraid to ask their instructor questions in class or go to office hours

Global warming is scary and abstract. No wonder we struggle to face up to it - and let politicians and industry off the hook



Jill Stein has repeatedly raised questions about vaccines' safety and efficacy



## In 406 days, President Trump has made **2,436** false or misleading claims

The Fact Checker's ongoing database of the false or misleading claims made by President Trump since assuming office.

Updated March 1, 2018

Show claims about



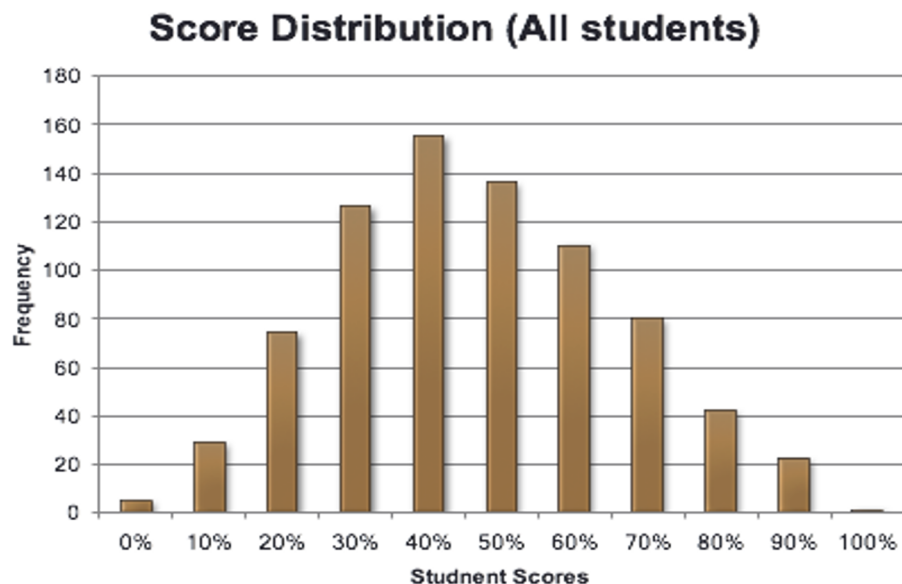
# Assessment Findings

2004: Our students as good as everyone else, which isn't that great.

2014: Our students get some concepts but not others.

*(Spoiler Alert: Still not great.)*

# Score Distribution: 2014 InfoLit Assessment



The individual skills questions had a wide range of success rates, with the lowest success question having 7.6% students answering correctly and the highest success question having 75.7% students answering correctly. The table below shows the percent correct and point biserial for each of the ten skills questions.

# A Concise Guide to Library Problems

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You don't know what you need.

We don't have what you need.

What you need doesn't exist.

# Examples of InfoLit problems in the Writing Center

**Student Papers and the misinformation minefield**

# Websites Students Use:

Secure | <https://www.organic-center.org/who-we-are/missiongoals/>



**The Organic Center**  
Bringing You the Science Behind Organic

[DONATE NOW](#)

[Home](#) [Who We Are](#) [Programs](#) [Organic Recipes](#) [Featured Scientists](#) [Scientific Resources](#) [Blog](#) [Multimedia Fun!](#)

### Organic Seed to Shelf



When you buy organic, you can be assured of its integrity from seed to shelf.  
[Watch More Organic Videos](#)

### The Organic Network



### Stay in the Loop

Sign up for our monthly blog and newsletter. Stay informed about current scientific findings and read our insights into current scientific issues by signing up here.

[SUBSCRIBE HERE](#)

**Did You Know?**  
Three new studies confirm that exposures to common insecticides during pregnancy can cut a child's IQ 4% to 7% by age 9.  
[sources listed here](#)

### Vision/Mission/Goals

*The Organic Center is a 501(c)(3) non-profit research and education organization based out of Washington D.C.*

#### Our Vision

A sustainable and secure food system that promotes the health of humans and the environment.

#### Our Mission

Our mission is to conduct and convene credible, evidence-based science on the environmental and health effects of organic food and farming and communicate the findings to the public.

We will achieve our mission through:

- Education and research on sustainable organic food and farming to improve the health of humans and the environment.
- Communicate credible, evidence-based science to examine the health and environmental impacts of sustainable organic food and farming
- Advance understanding about the health and environmental impacts of organic food and farming through scientific research
- Improve the efficacy and sustainability of organic farming methods through scientific research

#### Our Goals

- To engage and develop partnerships with universities, research institutions, federal agencies, organic farmers, and food systems advocates that are working to improve and transform agricultural systems.
- To stimulate and participate in research that will (1) fill knowledge gaps about the health and environmental benefits of organic farming and (2) increase the viability and sustainability of the U.S. agricultural system.
- To empower consumers to make choices that will improve their health, the health of the environment and the health of their communities through education and outreach.

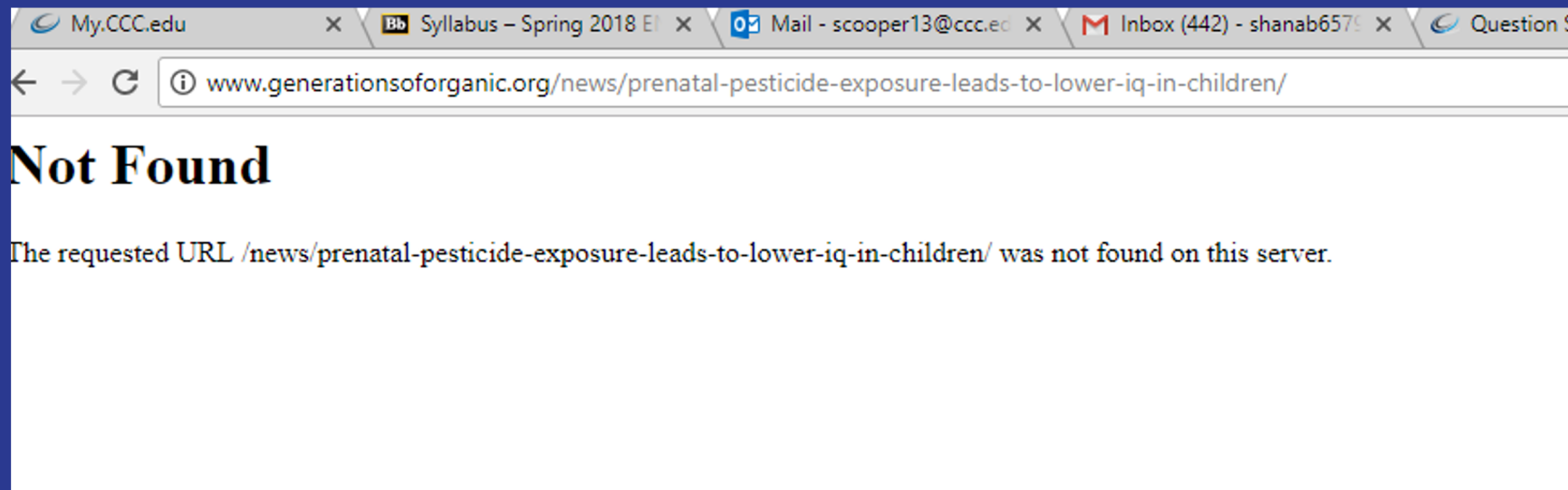


Assignment:  
Research Paper on  
Organic Food

Found: “The  
Organic Center”



# A Quick Visit to the “Sources” page:



# A Survey of Writing Center Tutors Finds Common Themes:

13% say students cite authoritative, objective, and timely sources.

74% say students express frequent difficulty finding sources.

80% say the students mostly use Google or other search engines for research.

# Other Comments

Students express that teachers have not covered how to find good, credible sources or how to cite and format papers. Assignment instructions require them to do this, but no one has taught them how.

Most of the students I work with aren't writing research-driven essays yet, so my feedback probably shouldn't be weighted as heavily as others, but when I do work with assignments that require sources, the sources are almost exclusively from the first page of a Google search.

More information literacy built into the curriculum would be extremely beneficial to students, especially in today's overwhelming digital information world

Regardless of the data gathered here - Students will only benefit from more info literacy. I would love to see a dedicated course. This is an important topic.

Some students do not understand how to sandwich quotes

I work with students who are in 96 or 101 level classes and so generally their papers don't require outside sources. I'm curious if there are aspects of information literacy that would be more relevant for them but not sure.

I answered two options on some questions because I feel that there are semesters where I notice one more over the other. I've been tutoring for four years and it seems to shift between students who cite something from inexperienced, biased, and/or out of date sources vs students that know how to find relevant and credible sources.

# Closing the loop

Library LibGuides

LIS101.com

Learning Communities

Increased Number of One-Shots

# Library LibGuides

On the homepage click the big, gold button

## Library

John Kieraldo

Library Department Chair



The Harold Washington College Library offers electronic databases, and print media to support the academic work of students, faculty, and staff as well as individual and group library and information literacy instruction.

Click the button below for the full library Web site

**HWC Library**



# LIS101.com

research skills / critical thinking / information literacy



About



For Librarians



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## Social and Political Dimensions of Information Literacy

Readings and Research Skills

by Todd Heldt

# The LC2 Learning Community

**A new approach to an old problem!**

# Expectations and Implementations

## **We hoped students would:**

**Interact more critically with information sources**

**Support arguments with credible research**

**Understand how information is created, shared, and interpreted**

**Decipher and interpret various forms of media as “artifacts” (articles, pictures, video clips, websites)**

**Take ownership of an independent research process with confidence**

## **And so we:**

**Met before the semester to establish common understandings/goals**

**Co-created complementary assignments**

**Mapped out the semester week-by-week**

**Spaced out our reading lists**

**Scouted the Internet for good examples of information artifacts**

**Interviewed students about their challenges with research**



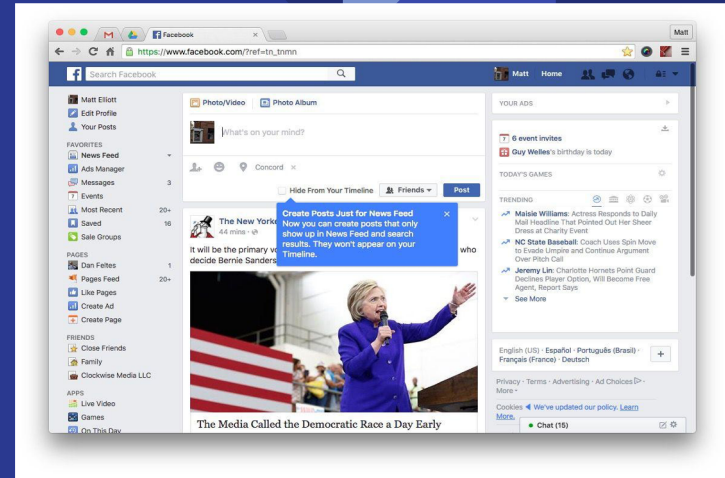
# English 102 In-Class Activities

1. Find out how much students know
2. Discuss what they see on a daily basis

## 3. Scaffolding of:

- *website reading and analysis*
- *online article reading and analysis*
- *discernation of credible vs. non-credible material*

1. *Treat the research process as a scientific experiment  
(question/hypothesis/discovery/assessment)*
2. Scaffold incorporation of credible material into writing
3. In-class workshops and troubleshooting weekly



# Assignments and Exercises

## Eng 102:

### Unbiased Assignment:

- Understand scientific approach
- Practice with credible sources
- Draw logical, supported conclusions

### Website Analysis Assignment

- Rhetorically analyze language
- Analyze visual messaging
- Investigate sources and links

#### Reading closely: Website Edition

Choose a website that delivers news. (Common sources are newspapers, news networks, magazines, and some non-profit organizations)

Visit the site and document the following:

First thing that you see or that takes your attention:

Next attention-taker:

Pictures/Headlines/Colors/Videos or Ads that appear prominently:

Messages you receive from the attention-takers and prominent content:

Messages you receive from wording in headlines or captions:

# The Media Research Project

**102:**

A group project required each student to view a television news show over a period of two weeks and write a rhetorical analysis based on background, structure, wording and tone, images, sounds, and biases.

**105:**

Research the background, funding, journalists, owners, and partnerships of the networks to create the intro to the assignment.

***Results:***

- *Deep absorption of course material*
- *Engaged, higher-level critical thinking*
- *Robust class discussion*
- *Strong analysis in papers*
- *Interest in news and awareness of current events*

## Group News Media Assessment

Working in a group of four or five people, assess and analyze different news media sources for bias, rhetoric, accuracy, and presentation.

**The purpose of the assignment is to watch for patterns and determine the organization's slant based on their program specific to video content.** Group members will divide the viewings or readings and assess the sources five times over the span of two weeks, recording their results in a journal.

### Watch:

Each member will observe one chosen source five different times to understand the nuances of presentation and style and discuss how each reflects on the mission of the organization as a whole.

### Write:

Each member will record their observations on the evaluation system, looking for patterns, biases, and rhetorical techniques. Students should include any screen caps, specific wording, or images in their observations.

### Compare:

The group will meet two times over the course of the two weeks to compare observations.

### Assess:

## I. Overall Tone and Individual Tones

Negative/positive/high-tech terms/scholarly/simplistic words  
lowered, alarmed, calm...)

Patterns of rhetoric and tone

Headlines and chyrons (Color/boldness/size/font, rhetoric)

"Other-guy-isms", Red Herrings, Ad Hominem Attacks, Fallacies

## II. Logic and Balance

Guest and anchor background

Subject coverage patterns (President, healthcare, foreign affairs)

Variety of opinion (left, right, both, neither, all)

Variety of source information ("according to...", experts)

Variety of topics (focus on one or two)

## III. Bias in Race/Culture/Religion/Age

Variety of Demographic of guests and anchors

Treatment of guests (TV or transcript interview)

# Better Outcomes: Grades, Analysis, Class Discussions

October 7, 2017  
Eng-102 Prof. Cooper  
News Media Assessment

## *Having a Hardball with Chris*

MSNBC's *Hardball with Chris Matthews* is an evening news show that has aired for over two decades with over twenty seasons worth of political content. Matthews covers a wide range of relevant news topics that are centered around **analyzing political agendas** and divergent ideologies. Guests who debate **these ideologies or perspectives are politicians, profound authors, or those of professional law or political background** and of high education. The show frames topics in a way for the audience to feel mentally engaged. The parent company NBCUniversal owns MSNBC (MicroSoft National Broadcasting Company). It is safe to say that after being very attentive to Matthews's nuances of presenting and carrying on information



Grade	LC2 Cohort	Prior Semester
A	6	4
B	7	6
C	2	4
D	0	0
F	5	4

# Assignments and Exercises

**LIS 105**

## Visual Literacy Exercise

In which we look at the tricks people use when presenting information in video format.

## Research Scavenger Hunt

In which we find interesting, relevant information within sources (as opposed to just finding the sources themselves).

# Better Library Outcomes

Students showed improvement!

More learning than in one-shots!

Still a small sample.

# Curriculum Loopholes

- Discrepancies in pre-college level schooling
- **Media literacy not defined within CCC curriculum**
- Students have not been taught about how to read online information or analyze websites or articles
- **Students may not take English 102 or take it later in CCC career**
- Instructors assume students know this material, or are receiving instruction elsewhere
- **Media Literacy is not integrated into basic Gen Ed courses**



# Changes we can make

*Collaborate with librarians during the assignment design phase.*

*Rent-a-tutor*

*Build learning communities with us around interesting themes.*

*Schedule multiple library visits to teach the entire research process.*

## **In the Classroom:**

- In-class demonstrations of searching for quality sources
- Scaffolding of incorporating research
- Q and A's in every class
- In-class discussion of sample student papers



# Change the Curriculum!

It's time.