

## How Information Literacy Benefits Students and Educational Institutions

### Nationwide Studies Show Significant Positive Effects

Students who have received effective information literacy instruction show gains that can help them and their institution. A 2017 study by the [Greater Western Library Alliance](#)<sup>1</sup> surveyed 42,000 students in more than 1,700 courses at 12 major research universities. It showed that:

- **Retention:** Retention rates were higher for students whose courses include IL instruction.
- **GPA:** The average first-year GPA for students whose courses included IL instruction was higher than for other students. Increased GPA has also been documented in a study by librarians at [Notre Dame University](#)<sup>2</sup> (the literature section of this paper discusses further such studies).
- **Credit Hours:** Students who took IL instruction successfully completed 1.8 more credit hours per year than students who did not.

Similar findings were noted in a six-year study of students at Hofstra University; there, study authors Amy Catalano and Sharon Phillips<sup>3</sup> noted, “the researchers found that students’ IL scores were significantly correlated with their GPAs, and that students who passed the IL test were more likely to be retained or graduate within six years.”

The knowledge and skills imparted by information literacy programs also helps students gain employment and stand out in the workplace. Project Information Literacy founder [Alison Head](#)<sup>4</sup> notes that employers aren’t satisfied with candidates who rely exclusively on Google to meet their information needs; they seek curious and engaged grads who demonstrate patient and persistent research using multiple sources and formats.

According to an [Aspen Institute report](#)<sup>5</sup> released in 2010, participation in American life increasingly requires media and other kinds of information literacy. The report goes into detail on how this can be achieved, but the introduction, particularly page viii, discusses the importance of information literacy and the gains that can be achieved when the public is information literate. The report emphasizes digital information as a driver of the importance of media education; in the years since the report was published, this has only become more relevant.

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<sup>1</sup> Greater Western Library Alliance (2017). “The Impact of Information Literacy Instruction on Student Success: A Multi-Institutional Investigation and Analysis.” [http://www.arl.org/storage/documents/publications/The\\_Impact\\_of\\_Information\\_Literacy\\_Instruction\\_on\\_Student\\_Success\\_October\\_2017.pdf](http://www.arl.org/storage/documents/publications/The_Impact_of_Information_Literacy_Instruction_on_Student_Success_October_2017.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Gaha, Ula; Hinnefeld, Suzanne; Pellegrino, Catherine. The Academic Library’s Contribution to Student Success: Library Instruction and GPA. *College & Research Libraries*, [S.l.], v. 79, n. 6, p. 737, sep. 2018. ISSN 2150-6701. <https://crl.acrl.org/index.php/crl/article/view/16824/18994>

<sup>3</sup> Catalano, Amy & Phillips, Sharon. (2016). Information literacy and retention: A case study of the value of the library. 11. 2-13. <https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/ebliip/index.php/EBLIP/article/view/28006>

<sup>4</sup> Head, A.J. 2017. Posing the million-dollar question: What happens after graduation? *Journal of Information Literacy*, 11(1), pp.80-90. <http://dx.doi.org/10.11645/11.1.2186>

<sup>5</sup> The Aspen Institute. *Digital and Media Literacy: A Plan of Action*. (2010). <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED523244.pdf>