Instructional Objectives

The following objectives are based on the ACRL *Information Literacy Competency Standards for Higher Education* and on *Objectives for Information Literacy Instruction: A Model Statement for Academic Librarians*. Using the journey metaphor implies the presence of alternative routes to information. Just as the understanding of physical locations will be different if the traveler is following descriptive directions or using a map, so too will the understanding of a field be different if a student asks for specific recommendations from an authority, or conducts an independent search, using retrieval tools. There are clearly times when one route or the other is preferable, but students will be better equipped to handle future inquiries if they are competent in both.

A. Understanding the shape of the information universe

1. Students are aware that information is communicated in a variety of types of sources
2. Students can identify several specific types of information sources (books, journals, magazines, web sites, etc.)
3. Students can differentiate between type of source and format (e.g.: journal article in paper, in a full-text database, in microform)
4. Students are aware that the particular type of information source has implications for both the quality and availability of the information being communicated.
    a. Students are aware that information can be free or have a cost.
    b. Students are aware that some information comes to them through a review process, and can generally identify the level of rigor attached to specific type.
    c. Students are aware that information that comes to them through a review process is generally more authoritative than information that bysteps that process.

B. Understanding what part of the country should be explored

1. Students can identify the type of information (statistics, single facts, reasoned arguments, broad overviews) that will answer their specific need.
2. Students can broadly identify likely information sources (articles, books, reference works, organizational or academic web sites) that may have the type of information they need.

C. Understanding the nature and purpose of the road maps

1. Students know that no single database, search engine, index or library retrieves all the information available.
2. Students understand that each database, search engine or index has a specific focus.
3. Students can, with guidance, select a database that is appropriate to their need.
4. Students can evaluate whether seeking a specific recommendation from an authority such as their instructor will be more efficient that using standard information retrieval tools.

D. Reading the road maps

1. Students can identify concepts and terms describing their search.
2. Students can construct boolean statements describing their search.
    a. Students understand the function of AND.
    b. Students understand the function of OR.
    c. Students can construct statements using simple nesting.
3. Students can truncate terms effectively.
4. Students understand the difference between keyword searching and authority searching.
5. Students use database helps or other assistance to determine the specific protocols for the database they are using.
6. Students are aware that selective bibliographies, whether separately published or included in articles, identify recommended sources.

E. Negotiating twists in the road

1. Students are aware that research on their initial topic should begin with a period of exploration into its viability.
2. Students are aware that there is rarely, if ever, a "perfect" information resource which precisely addresses their initial topic.
3. Students are aware that, for some, uncertainty and anxiety may occur during initial stages of research, but may lead to finding a productive focus.
4. Students are prepared to refine both their topics and their search strategies as necessary, recognizing this as part of the research process.
5. Students realize that classification systems pull together books on similar topics in a way that permits browsing by researchers.

F. Walking the walk

1. Students can identify parts of a record necessary to locate and use it.
2. Students can determine if the library owns or has access to a specific information source.
3. Students can locate call numbers within the library.
4. Students can use library equipment safely and efficiently.
5. Students are aware of the availability of Inter-Library Loan.
6. Students know where to find such basic services as Circulation, Reserves and Reference within the Library.
7. Students understand the ethics of research and attribution.
8. Students know that different disciplines use specific forms of citation, and that the Library provides guides for their use.

G. Deciding if it was worth the trip

1. Students understand why they need to evaluate the source.
   a. Students understand some unreliable information sources exist.
   b. Students can determine whether the source is useable and appropriate for their research needs.
2. Students can evaluate the source, using such questions as:
   a. Who is the author? What are his/her credentials?
   b. Is the information up-to-date?
   c. Is the information presented clearly?
   d. Is the content/coverage complete?
   e. Does there appear to be a point-of-view or bias?
   f. Can the information be verified in another source?
   g. Do other sources confirm or question the point-of-view?
3. Students are aware that information sources may reflect debates within a field.
   a. Students can identify conflicting viewpoints of a topic.
   b. Students can assess whether they have explored all pertinent viewpoints.