

What is Open Inquiry for Information Literacy?

- A new model for information literacy instruction based on virtue epistemology. It addresses the virtues needed to become capable and open-minded citizens who search, evaluate, and contribute responsibly to the information landscape. It also identifies common cognitive biases that must be mitigated in order to become more virtuous learners and contributors to the information landscape.



How does the Open Inquiry model differ from other ways of teaching Information Literacy?

- The Open Inquiry Toolkit complements other approaches such as Metaliteracy, Informed Learning, and Critical Information Literacy by focusing intentionally on the habits of mind needed for students to develop learning pathways through a rapidly changing and uncertain information landscape. The Open Inquiry Toolkit specifically draws upon and extends the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy's dispositions (habits of mind) to create opportunities for better assignments, courses, and class discussions.



“ What are the intellectual virtues and cognitive biases in this approach to Information Literacy? Dispositions (habits of mind) to create opportunities for better assignments, courses, and class discussions. ”

Intellectual Virtues

Curiosity
Open-mindedness
Intellectual humility
Intellectual tenacity
Intellectual autonomy
Epistemic responsibility

Cognitive Biases

Confirmation bias
Cognitive dissonance
The Certainty trap
Mere exposure effect
Conformity
In-Group bias

What are some classroom discussion activities that promote Open Inquiry for Information Literacy?

- Self-assessment of intellectual virtues and biases
- Self-assessment of information ecosystem
- Steelmanning
- Effective dialogue skills
- Gallery walk
- Developing crowdsourced list of research questions
- Generating multiple perspectives on an issue
- Identifying a spectrum of perspectives
- Self-reflections on classroom discussions

What course and assignment design strategies are central to Open Inquiry for Information Literacy?

- Selecting intellectual virtues most appropriate for the subject matter
- Using throughlines to design assignments and units within courses
- Using calibrated levels of difficulty
- Including pivot points for reflection/rethinking
- Creating pre-research staging for assignments and courses
- Identifying missing voices and perspectives
- Teaching gradients of acceptance for evaluating credibility of sources

What principles of Open Inquiry inform this model?

- Pluralistic perspectives, belief systems, and methods
- Rethinking and reconceptualizing inquiries and questions
- Extending opportunities for difficulty
- Deepening awareness of one's own biases and cultivating intellectual virtues



Intellectual Virtues



- **Curiosity:** the capacity to observe, ponder, and inquire, characterized by a propensity for wonderment about the world and a desire to understand it by being attentive and asking questions.
- **Open-mindedness:** an encompassing motivation to see things as they are, characterized by the willingness to challenge an existing belief in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding through due regard for evidence and reasoning.
- **Intellectual humility:** a willingness to acknowledge the limitations and imperfections of one's own knowledge and to identify and admit what one doesn't know.
- **Intellectual tenacity:** the capacity to withstand intellectual challenges while maintaining intellectual carefulness, thoroughness, and diligence, characterized by the willingness to exert effort in thinking, reasoning, and learning.
- **Intellectual autonomy:** the exercise of intellectual agency in inquiring and gathering, attending to, evaluating, and synthesizing evidence and reasoning in the pursuit of knowledge and understanding exemplified by independent thinking.
- **Epistemic responsibility:** an appreciation for the epistemic interdependence of all thinkers and the necessity of epistemic community characterized by an embrace of intellectual pluralism and the civil exchange of ideas and information.

Cognitive Biases



- **Confirmation bias:** the tendency to notice and give greater attention and credence to information that affirms one's existing beliefs.
 - *Curiosity can mitigate confirmation bias.*
- **Cognitive dissonance:** the tendency to engage in motivated reasoning and avoid information that challenges one's existing beliefs and attitudes, or otherwise makes one uncomfortable.
 - *Open-mindedness can mitigate cognitive dissonance.*
- **The Certainty Trap:** "a resolute unwillingness to consider the possibility that we might not be right or might not be right in the way that we think we are" (Redstone 2022).
 - *Intellectual humility can help one avoid the Certainty Trap.*
- **Mere exposure effect:** a tendency to prefer the familiar.
 - *In information-seeking, intellectual tenacity can mitigate the mere exposure effect.*
- **Conformity:** the tendency to adopt or espouse attitudes and beliefs according to group norms.
 - *Intellectual autonomy can mitigate the tendency for conformity.*
- **In-group bias:** the tendency to prefer members of one's in-group relative to one's out-group that can contribute to polarization and tribalism.
 - *Epistemic responsibility can mitigate in-group bias.*

Learn more about the Open Inquiry Toolkit here:
openinquiry.info